

Common Ground

Are Race Relations the Business of the Federal Government?

Attorney General Francis Biddle

Lester B. Granger, Louis Adamic, William H.
Hastie, John Collier and Saul K. Padover

ADOBE CHRISTMAS Dorothy L. Pillsbury

BLACK MOTHER PRAYING IN THE SUMMER 1943
Owen Dodson

WHITE FOLKS DO THE FUNNIEST THINGS
Langston Hughes

FAREWELL TO LITTLE TOKYO Larry Tajiri

A JEW TO HIS FELLOW-AMERICANS Marie Syrkin

— *and others* —

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ARE RACE RELATIONS
THE BUSINESS OF THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT?

DEMOCRACY AND RACIAL MINORITIES

FRANCIS BIDDLE

I PROPOSE to discuss some of the broader aspects of presently existing minority problems in our American democracy, particularly as they concern three groups whose relation to the greater body of our nation has been brought into sharp focus by two years of war. I refer to the Japanese, the Jews, and the Negroes.

Our approach to the troublesome problems of minorities cannot any longer be local or provincial or in the terms even of the difficulties facing any particular group, or for evolving the traditions or the tenets of any single race or any one religion. For the war has shown that at least certain of the more acute minority problems are national in their scope, and, what is even more important, national in their effect on our American integrity. Not any longer, then, can the difficulties of any particular minority be the sole concern of that minority. It is the very nature of our American democracy that it is made up of minorities—Catholic and Jewish, Negro and Japanese, Quakers and Indians, organized labor and farmers. This is peculiarly true of us, because our American heritage draws strength from the fact that our shores have since the beginning held invitation and asylum to those minorities driven out from other countries by the oppressions of the majority—from the majority power of

landlord, or religious sect, or government—and come here to find tolerance and acceptance. Is it not of our American essence and tradition that these dissenters against suppression have found that they could and did live side by side under the sky of a democracy that welcomed differences because it believed in the practice of freedom? Minorities are then inherent in our national life, more than in most of the older nations; and that here they could be *united* is our pride and the admiration of our friends. We have achieved union without insisting on uniformity.

The problem of minorities is today of deep spiritual significance to religion, for it stems from the religious tradition of the dignity of man as man. The importance of the human personality is a fundamental concern on their highest levels of both Jewish and Christian faiths. It is profoundly a religious idea that is now gravely imperiled throughout the world. And our religious bodies can afford the whole world a moral leadership in this conception, so close to the democratic faith—but only if that leadership is bravely exercised first here in our own country.

It is a curious paradox that although during this war certain civil liberties have suffered less than in the First World War, the tensions arising from the place of these

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three racial minorities in the national life have greatly increased. In the last war the rights of alien enemies, particularly of course Germans who were living in our country, and of those radicals who opposed the war, and our entry into it, were little respected. National prejudice then ran against anyone of German ancestry, no matter how long he had lived here or how loyal he was to us. It ran, too, against anyone who showed opposition to the war. Freedom of speech was less tolerated, and more newspapers were suppressed on the ground that they were seditious. There were many more prosecutions, both state and Federal, often on ill-considered and petty grounds. And the years that directly followed the war were characterized by mass raids that expressed a blind resentment against foreigners, who were too often classed in the popular mind as radical and therefore un-American.

These attacks have not recurred in this war or at least to a far less degree. The Italians and the Germans in the United States have not felt the brunt of popular hatred (I do not include our treatment of the Japanese, which I shall discuss later).

There are obvious explanations for this. National, state and local governments have acted more wisely, and have not permitted the war psychology to whip them into harsh and unnecessary measures of repression.

Actually there were far fewer Italians and Germans in 1941 than in 1917. There are no accurate census figures of the number of Germans and Italians in this country in 1917. But we have the 1920 figures, which give us a fairly accurate picture for purposes of comparison. In 1920, there were 458,388 German aliens in the United States. In 1940, when they were registered under the Federal law, there were 314,432. And under the alien certification program of 1942, the number had dropped to 270,556. In terms of percentage to population,

the change of relation would of course be much more marked. With our quota limitation system we were rapidly absorbing the foreign-born. It may be also that in some ways the American public itself has changed, has grown more tolerant in this quarter century, is more unified, less unstable, more mature and less prone to treat the alien as a whipping boy.

On the other hand our treatment of Japanese American citizens hardly accords with these other signs of greater acceptance.

When in April of 1942, the United States Army decided to exclude the 110,000 persons of Japanese origin, citizens and non-citizens alike, from the West Coast as a military precaution to protect our Western Defense Command, the treacherous attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor was four months fresh, and there had been movements of airplanes and submarines which indicated the possibility of an attack. On June 3, 1942, Japanese planes raided Dutch Harbor in Alaska. The Japanese in the United States were concentrated in vital spots along the West Coast—in Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles. It was not surprising that public opinion in those states where Japanese were concentrated in great numbers was deeply disturbed over the possibility of sabotage and reacted violently against all persons of Japanese origin, loyal and disloyal alike. The legal theory on which they were excluded was that anyone—citizen and alien alike—could be moved out of a war area for its protection. The theory was valid enough. But, like most theories, its ultimate test depended on the reasonableness of its exercise. To say that citizens could be moved out of a war area might depend on the size of the area. If they could be moved away from the two coasts, away from possible points of attack, how far inland could they be taken? Could citizens be detained in any specified

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part of the country? Roughly two-thirds of the persons moved were American citizens by reason of their birth in the United States, under the provisions of the American Constitution, which protected them as effectively as it protected other citizens, irrespective of the color of their skins or the nationality of their ancestry. But in terms of public antipathy no distinction was drawn between citizens and aliens, between loyal and disloyal. In the eyes of the public, all persons of Japanese ancestry were "Japs"; and we had seen what the "Japs" had done to our soldiers.

The relocation centers were not designed as places of internment but as a refuge. In most instances local communities at first would not have them, at least in substantial numbers. Today the loyal Japanese are being gradually re-established outside the centers in places where they may gain tolerance and acceptance. The War Relocation Authority has no power to intern American citizens; and constitutionally it is hard to believe that any such authority could be granted to the government. The decision of the Supreme Court in the *Hirabayashi* case, decided last spring, indicates this conclusion. The Court sustained the validity of curfew orders applied by the military authorities prior to the evacuation of the Japanese on the West Coast. The validity of the evacuation orders was not even considered, let alone the far more difficult problem of detention. Even the curfew order was said by Mr. Justice Murphy in his concurring opinion to go "to the very brink of constitutional power."

I emphasize this particular problem—very special in its aspects—because it is far from solution; and public opinion, often hostile or indifferent, has made its solution infinitely more difficult.

We have too casually accepted, I think, this perhaps necessary but obviously temporary meeting of the problem. We have

hardly recognized its serious consequences and the fact that it has never occurred before. Would anyone, before the war, have complacently accepted the proposition that the government could move 75,000 American citizens out of their homes, and hold them with enemy aliens for relocation?

I do not believe that among those of Japanese parentage born and bred in America, graduated from our public schools, many of them speaking nothing but English, there are not many men and women and young people who are loyal to our country. Of course 18 months in detention camps may have made some of them waver in their loyalty. But I am glad of the policy of the War Relocation Authority which is directed toward sorting out the loyal citizens and returning them to the community.

Last August a group of Japanese aliens in one of the internment camps operated by the Department of Justice at Crystal City, Texas, was repatriated. This was a "family" camp, so-called because wives and children of the interned alien enemies were allowed to live with them in family groups. Among them was a Japanese family whose two sons, American-born, had already been released on their stated desire to remain in the United States, even though their family was returning to Japan. The morning the repatriates were scheduled to leave, the two Japanese American boys returned to the camp to say good-bye to their parents. Just at sunrise, as the American flag was being raised, and as the entire population of the camp gathered about the flag-pole for a farewell ceremony, the two young Japanese Americans stepped forward, saluted the flag, and sang "God Bless America." They then left to join the American Army.

Recently a report from Fifth Army headquarters made special mention of Japanese Americans fighting side by side

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with other Americans in Italy. I am told that more than five thousand men of Japanese origin are today enrolled in our Army. Neither Japan nor Germany can boast of American battalions in their ranks. The Fifth Army says of these Japanese Americans: "They obviously believe in what they're doing, and look calmly secure because of it." Our sons are today fighting side by side with the sons of Italians, of Germans, and of Japanese. Is anything more needed to entitle the loyal Japanese Americans to recognition?

For this is the essence of our democracy in practice. The Washington Evening Star in a recent editorial, reporting the dispatch I have mentioned, made this admirable comment: "All races, all colors, make us up. And when wars like the present one engulf us, all races and all colors take up arms for America. When we strike back at our enemies, the American kin of those enemies do the striking—Americans of Italian extraction, of German extraction, even of Japanese extraction. We are of almost every extraction conceivable, black, white and yellow, and so we are tied together not by any mystical philosophy of blood or common ethnic traits, but solely and simply by an idea—the idea of democracy, of individual freedom, of liberty under law, of a justice before which all of us stand equal."

II

What has rendered peculiarly acute any mistreatment of racial minorities—Japanese, Negro, Jewish—is our reiterated insistence on democratic equality of opportunity, irrespective of race, and the total nature of this war compared to the last. Far more now than then, every man, white or black, Jew or Gentile, is enlisted to fight or to work for the common cause. But how can every man believe that the cause is a common one including him as well as another, if he sees discrimination against him as a member of a race or of a

religion; discrimination in the Army in which he must fight, in industry, in the civil offices of the government? I do not believe that many will deny the discrimination, or its evil effects on our democratic ideals, except those whose prejudices, though honestly held, blind them to the tragic contradictions involved in such behavior.

I know that there are those who contend that any discussion of these tense and difficult relationships in the midst of a war is unwise. Why stir up trouble—so the argument runs—and give ammunition for propaganda and the appearance of disunity to our enemies? Why not put off an attempt at solution until the war is over? If those conditions were sporadic or local in their origin, the argument would have more weight. But they are not. They involve many sections of our country and are creating a national psychology of intolerance that makes them infinitely more difficult and serious. Moreover, the appearance of national disunity on the outside, serious as it is, seems to me less evil than the actual disunity inside our ranks. It is not exact to say that the recent outbreaks of racial violence in America have been fostered by Axis propaganda. But it is certainly true to conclude that the effect of such violence serves well the enemies' purpose. Immediately after they occurred the Detroit race riots were reported and commented on from short-wave radios in Germany and Japan; and the news soon traveled into Africa and China and India.

But when all is said and done, I am less concerned about how the United States looks to her enemies. What I care about is what she looks like to her friends; to those who love and believe in her; to Americans in the field who fight and die for her; to Americans at home and abroad who want to be able to speak with pride and without any mental reservation when they say with Thomas Jefferson "this government, the best hope of man."

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I am not seeking to fix responsibility in any group or in any class for these unhappy conditions. The blame is universal, for surely all Americans must share the responsibility for this so un-American condition in a country which is, I believe, on the whole, honestly dedicated to democratic living. And just as the blame must be shared by all alike, so it concerns us all—government, society, the churches, whose function here is indistinguishable from the democratic concept; labor, and the employers of labor, the press and the school and college.

Too often in the past the Negro problem has been thought of and talked about as if it were sectional, as if it existed in certain states in the South and was not a problem in the North. Whatever once was true, it is perfectly clear that the problem is now national in its scope and is not confined to any particular part of the country. The Los Angeles disorders, the Detroit riots, the New York disorders, all of recent months, show that racial clashes since the war started do not occur only in the South and do not spring only from the ancient prejudices and hatred and fears inherited from the Civil War, and from the outnumbering of the whites by Negroes in certain parts of the South, but are implicit in great industrial societies that have never known slavery or the inherited memories of a slave relationship.

War unifies a country, not merely by giving expression to a common effort, but by throwing together vast masses of young men who in their training at the camps exchange ideas and the points of view of other parts of the country. A large proportion of the camps, obviously for practical reasons, has been built in the South; and the Negro officers and soldiers trained there have without doubt been treated in many cases with discrimination, rudeness and even brutality by white civilians and

white police officers. The result among the Negroes is bitter disillusionment and anguish, as anyone knows who has talked to colored troops or read the letters they have sent home. The Army has been alive to the serious effect of this treatment on morale, and has made efforts to improve it. An article in the August Infantry Journal deals frankly with this form of race prejudice. Let me quote from it: "Sometimes the prejudice against the Negroes flares up in the Army. It is not a problem, however, in a camp where it is well understood that a soldier in the United States uniform is a soldier, not a white or a Negro, Christian or Jew, rich man or poor, but a soldier, and as such as worthy of respect."

We must realize then that the problem of the relation of the white to the Negro, in fact the problems of most racial minorities, are national in their scope. They concern all of us, for they go to the roots of our democratic standards. I have emphasized the Negro soldier, for mistreatment or disrespect of the Negro citizen in uniform, who fights to defend our flag, is disavowal of those things for which our flag is the symbol—a free nation under God. To this promise of American life we have two commitments which we cannot revoke, which we cannot disregard. Our national Constitution guarantees equality of treatment and opportunity to all. More recently we have assumed obligations of defending the democracy elsewhere in the world attacked by totalitarian aggression. These principles and promises must be fulfilled in the due course of the evolution of our democratic life. Nor can we assume the obligations of a defense of world democracy if our example of democracy at home, in this fundamental aspect, is neither consistent nor courageous. Race intolerance is no longer a matter merely of domestic concern. For it undermines our

moral authority as a nation which apparently can profess but cannot practice democracy.

III

The injustices that have been done, that are being done the Negro, are obviously recognized throughout the country. But the implications of this treatment, I am certain, are not generally realized. We have too long accepted discrimination to achieve in any short time or with any determined resolution the will to change an injustice that has to some extent formed the pattern of habit. I do not mean that the need is agitation, which but tends to accentuate the bitterness; or any campaign for immediate reform of every evil on all sides at once. But the agitation is here already, emerging from the flame of the war which has suddenly brought out the difference to which I have referred—the difference between our profession and our performance.

I suggest that what is greatly needed is a broader and more intelligent use of the moral and educational influences of the community. Most Americans think they believe in equality of opportunity. But intellectual honesty in such a field of prejudice and ancient folk ways can be achieved only by the slow and steady impact of education.

Just as the responsibility for existing conditions cannot be fixed in any one group, or in any single section of the country, so the change must come from the efforts of all stable and progressive elements of our society. The recent outbreak of anti-Semitism among Boston public school children shows how great is the part educational institutions must play in the picture. One of the striking features of the Detroit riots was that there were no racial clashes in the plants where a well-disciplined union had insisted it would not tolerate the refusal of whites to work side

by side with Negroes. But in some unions discrimination against Negroes is practiced by not permitting them to vote; from some unions they are excluded, and in others prevented from rising into skilled jobs.

The government—national, state and local—must of course bear its share of responsibility for existing conditions.

I cannot here take time to discuss in any detail the steps which the Department of Justice is taking to help the situation. Our particular field is the enforcement of the Federal criminal statutes which may be violated. On this score there seems to be a very wide misunderstanding, particularly among these minority groups, as to the extent of our jurisdiction. Briefly considered there are two types of Federal statutes that are sometimes applicable. The first includes the so-called “civil rights” sections of the criminal code which make it a crime to conspire to deprive citizens of their rights guaranteed by the Federal Constitution, and for officers of the law, acting under color of law, to deprive them of such rights. These statutes were adopted soon after the Civil War, and have been very seldom invoked until the last three or four years. The Civil Liberties Section of the Criminal Division was organized to enforce them. We have obtained a number of indictments, though less convictions, under their provisions. Ordinary crimes of violence by individuals, such as criminal assaults, murder, and mob violence generally, do not come within the Federal jurisdiction. I shall presently cite one striking instance where this Federal jurisdiction was successfully invoked.

The other group of Federal offenses to which I refer deals with the war, such as resisting selective service, and sedition. Anti-racial acts and utterances are not seditious in this criminal sense. As far as criminal enforcement is concerned, therefore, most acts of racial or mob violence

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are punishable under the laws of the State where they occur. Of course if it can be shown that these acts are the result of a conscious effort or conspiracy intended to hamper the war effort, or to use a current phrase, are "Axis inspired," the Federal Courts would have jurisdiction. There has been no evidence or even indication of this in any of the recent riots and looting in Los Angeles, Detroit, or New York.

In any event government, Federal or state, must have the support of public opinion. But let me go further. It must have not only the indignation of the public generally against racial discriminations and outrages, but the insistence of the leaders of public opinion in the particular community involved, where the trouble occurs, that it is vital for their good to enforce the law and to prevent violations of law. And it is at this point that the influence of the church, of the press, of local leaders in all walks of life, can be felt. Ultimately government can do little without the support of that *community* public opinion. And the problem is not only national, it is necessarily local as well.

Let me give you two instances of what I have in mind. I have referred to the Federal statute that makes it criminal for law enforcement officers acting under the color of law to deprive anyone of his rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. Recently a jury in Newton, Baker County, Georgia, convicted the county sheriff, a deputy sheriff, and a Newton policeman under this statute for beating a Negro to death under cover of a forged warrant charging larceny of an automobile tire.

Newton is the county seat of Baker County. The county has a population of seven or eight hundred people. It is one of the few counties in the United States where there is no railroad.

Bob Hall, a Negro, owned a pearl-handled automatic forty-five pistol. Deputy

Sheriff Jones wanted it, and got it. After a month Hall appealed to the Sheriff, and finally to the grand jury, who under instructions from the Solicitor General of the Circuit ordered the gun returned. But the Sheriff would not return it. On the morning of January 29 of this year the Sheriff received a letter from Hall's lawyer demanding the return of the gun. On the evening of January 29th Hall met his death at the hands of the three defendants. The State brought no prosecution. The Federal government did. And on October 7, 1943, a local jury in this little town in Georgia, all of whom must have personally known the Sheriff, his deputy, and the policeman, convicted all three. The defendants were sentenced by Judge Bascom S. Deaver to the maximum penalties under the law, three years' imprisonment and a fine of \$1,000 each. It is significant that the Judge, the members of the jury, the United States Attorney and his staff, my special assistant whom I detailed to help the United States Attorney, and even the Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents who collected the evidence, were all native Georgians.

The government showed that on the day of the killing the defendants had been drunk for nearly six hours; that they boasted they were "going to get" a Negro who had "lived too long," who had got too smart and gone before a grand jury and employed a lawyer to recover his gun; that they arrested Hall, handcuffed his hands behind his back, brought him to the courthouse square, and there beat his head with a blackjack; and that they dragged Hall by the feet through the Square into the jail where he was left in a dying condition. Hall died a few minutes after he was taken from the jail to a hospital.

The defendants tried to show that they had arrested Hall under a warrant, that Hall tried to shoot them, and that in self protection they had to use a blackjack.

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The jury did not believe this; but what is more, the jury were not carried away by the arguments of defense counsel who tried to inflame their prejudices by injecting into the case the issues of race and "Yankee interference" in their community. This is the first time a conviction of this kind has ever been obtained in Georgia.

I take this occasion to say all honor to these twelve white men, who saw their duty and did it, under a wise and courageous charge from Judge Deaver, enforcing *their law*, the Federal law of *their* government.

The Atlanta Journal said, commenting on the result: "Georgia's justice must become a synonym for equal justice for all, colored or white, humble or mighty." And the Atlanta Daily World, in another editorial: "The determination of Baker County's most distinguished white citizens . . . lends a new and encouraging stand against mob violence and brutality in the South."

While the punishment in this case scarcely fits the crime, it is the maximum under the Federal law involved, and the action of this Federal judge and jury is what I mean by leadership exercised within the community.

I suggest another example. The Federal Public Housing Authority is vitally interested in building homes for low wage workers particularly in congested areas in the great and often dangerously overcrowded industrial centers. It is often very difficult to get the local authorities to agree on locations for housing for Negroes. Often delays of many months intervene while the housing situation becomes more acute, as recently in Baltimore where a decision to select four sites, agreed on by the city authorities, after many months of negotiation, has been finally worked out. The program totals 1750 units, both temporary and permanent. The final plan had

the approval of the city and county authorities and was developed to complement plans contemplated by private builders for Negro housing. The importance of community leadership in such practical and urgent problems is readily apparent. Without such leadership accomplishment becomes well-nigh impossible.

Axis propaganda in this country took the form of vicious anti-Semitic teachings. There were a number of fascist groups preaching disunity and race antagonism in the name of patriotism. Some of their members have been convicted of sedition, more are presently under indictment. Not all of these groups were directly Axis-inspired; but, led by violently bitter and prejudiced persons, they deliberately aroused in their publications and at their meetings the hatreds of the crowd against Negroes, against Jews, against foreigners, against liberals, against all who believed in a tolerant and generous democracy. They appealed to the maladjusted, to the ignorant, to the prejudiced. And their activities were not unprofitable. Contributions flowed in from frightened souls who believed the lies about Jewish domination or labor dictatorship, and from the thousands of little people who saw themselves saving their country, seizing a pathetic color of importance by joining movements and starting imaginary crusades.

Most of these wretched little pools of discontent and hatred have been dissolved or have disappeared under the great forward sweep of the country united in the war effort. But the fruit of their teaching is still with us. For all of them under different labels of patriotism or Americanism advocated hatred and violence, directed against one minority group or another. Our democratic institutions have at other times had to contend with similar attacks—the A.P.A., the Know-Nothings, the Ku

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Klux Klan. Today as in the past they incite men's hatreds into channels of violence and mob action against the orderly processes of the law. They set one group against another—Catholic against Jew—white against Negro. They try to disrupt the very essence of our democracy. They occur where misunderstanding and prejudice have the first play; where these weaknesses have been stirred from the dark places of human nature into need for violent expression, and whipped into action; where the forces of education and religion have been unable to persuade or to control. Violence can be swiftly roused; reason and tolerance are the products of patience and the background of a decent way of living.

I have spoken chiefly of the Japanese and Negroes, and have said almost nothing of the increase of anti-Semitism. By this omission I do not mean to indicate that I am not deeply concerned with the cruel and dangerous form it is taking. It is profoundly shocking that it should have developed among school children, who, left to themselves, could hardly have turned against other children merely because they were Jewish. The desecration of Jewish cemeteries is hideously like what we have seen in those countries which have been conquered by the Germans. As Americans we must not tolerate this outbreak of the Axis pattern in our own country. It must be met, as it occurs, by firm law enforcement, at the same time that efforts are directed toward the eradication of its underlying causes.

But the efforts of government, whether in the field of law enforcement or elsewhere can do little, as I have said, without the support of public opinion. The President when he created the Committee on Fair Employment Practice, whose practical duty it is to remove barriers of discrimination which deny war jobs to available and needed workers, had this in

mind when he stated, in the Executive Order, "that the democratic way of life within the nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders."

IV

It has been suggested from time to time that there should be established by the Administration a council which should deal with these crucial minority problems. Basic to all these suggestions is the idea of research and education for the formation of public opinion. But I do not believe that the government should in any way attempt to mould public opinion, even in this field, by any such organized approach. It is said that if men of outstanding reputation were appointed on such a council or committee their work would be unpolitical and objective. Perhaps; and yet I do not think that government should institute or organize such a movement. The idea has creative possibilities for good. But the impulse should rise from the private sources. The idea warrants exploration in these terms. The purpose of such a group would be primarily one of education. A good deal of research has been done. Possibly more is required. The need as I see it is not merely to collect the information and to distribute it, as objectively as possible, but by discussion, teaching, education, and co-operation on the community level to bring to our people an immediate realization of the tragic implications of these disunities. Already local groups have done effective work, as for instance at the Durham, Atlanta and Richmond conferences. The need is for a sustained effort and a national approach.

I have great faith in the effectiveness of discussion and negotiation, particularly when it involves the leaders of the community itself, and where it is grounded on local interests, cleared from agitation and

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pulled out of the clouds of any philosophy, or theory of government. The men of Baker County, Georgia, whose action I have described, have done more for their community and for their state than anyone outside of Baker County could have accomplished.

I remember when I was Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board in 1934-1935 we laid great emphasis on settlements of labor disputes by negotiation locally before they reached the stage of formal presentation to the board, when they were often overcharged with emotion. In several of the great cities we organized local panels of the leaders of industry and of labor, with a public chairman, who acted promptly and were immediately available to prevent labor disputes before they came to an issue, or to settle them after the disputes broke out. It was day-to-day work; and you could see the way representatives on each side grew to respect the other point of view, as prejudices gradually fell away under the impact of disinterested and humane cooperation for a common end—industrial peace.

If such a Committee or Council were formed to deal, let us say, with the minority problem of the Negro, it should be of course bi-racial in membership, with Negroes playing an equal part with whites. For the reason for its being would not be that whites were doing something for Negroes, but that both Negroes and

whites were working for the common good of their country. And although it should be national in scope, and have in its ranks men and women from every section of the country, it must build through those who are the leaders of the local communities in the schools, in the labor unions, in groups of employers, in women's clubs, in churches of all faiths. It would seek to develop a local pride in tolerance and fair play that would not permit such assaults in our American way of life.

We have talked much of democracy, of the American way of life, in these last few years. But surely it cannot grow into the fullness of realization, as long as we, through indifference or through fear, permit these bitter injustices to continue. What we do today will write the history of the years to come. Do you remember what Walt Whitman said?

"We have frequently printed the word Democracy. Yet I cannot too often repeat that it is a word the real gist of which still sleeps, quite unawaken'd, notwithstanding the resonance and the many angry tempests out of which its syllables have come, from pen or tongue. It is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten, because that history has yet to be enacted."

This was a speech delivered by Attorney General Francis Biddle at the annual dinner of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, November 11, 1943.

NO SHORT-CUT TO DEMOCRACY

LESTER B. GRANGER

A POINT established by Wendell Willkie in a recent address in St. Louis exposes the fatal weakness in the proposal for an Institute of Ethnic Democracy as set forth by John Collier and Saul Padover in the Autumn issue of *COMMON GROUND*. The authors suggested the establishment of a Federal bureau in the Department of the Interior to function in the field of "minority group" problems somewhat as the Office of Indian Affairs functions in behalf of our American Indian population. The main difference between the Indian Office and the proposed Institute of Ethnic Democracy is that while the former actually administers the reservation life of Indians, the latter's function would be largely one of interpretation and conciliation in majority-minority conflict situations.

To the politically immature who wish to see alleviation of majority-minority conflict in this country, such a plan might easily seem to be a reasonable and constructive effort in behalf of racial, religious, and cultural groups. It might be argued that since the Federal government is increasingly charged with specific responsibility for protecting the social welfare of the people, it would be natural for it to assume the role of friendly interpreter in cases where sections of our population suffer social and economic insecurity because of existing popular prejudices.

Such reasoning receives further support in the position which a number of outstanding spokesmen for various groups have assumed in the last several years. A

classic example is the establishment of the Fair Employment Practice Committee to remove racial discrimination from war employment. The Committee was created by executive order of the President in response to skillfully organized "mass pressure" of Negroes, supported by other ethnic groups and many outstanding liberal leaders. The FEPC has had a rocky road to travel during its brief existence and is being continued today only because of a terrific amount of lobbying by liberal leadership during the early part of 1943. Now, inspired by their success in retaining the Committee, as well as by the prospect of racial discrimination continuing in the period of postwar reconstruction, a number of Negro and labor leaders are pressing for a permanent Fair Employment Practice Committee, created by legislation and established as a new bureau in the Federal government. This proposal differs from the Collier-Padover plan in certain basic administrative details. Both plans, however, stem from a common impatience with the slowness of democratic operation in government and the failure of the Federal government thus far to discharge its responsibility to serve equally "all the people."

For persons who have accepted these plans as soundly constructive, it should be illuminating to consider the initial point raised by Mr. Willkie, in his St. Louis address. The significance of that point stands, even though it was part of a frankly political attack on the New Deal Administration by the leading candidate

for the Republican Presidential nomination. He declared that too-long maintenance in office of the same political party, whether Republican or Democratic, encourages bureaucratic government in the worst sense of the word and produces results that are disastrous to a democracy. "Power," stated Mr. Willkie, "breeds within itself certain abuses which will destroy democratic society. The individuals who hold it inevitably come sincerely to believe that they alone possess the requisite knowledge to govern the people."

Here is a searching remark which has special pertinency to the experiences of Negroes during the Depression and war periods. Negroes need only to take a rueful backward glance at the record of our wartime government in dealing with racial questions to realize how truly the Willkie dictum applies to problems of racial relations. Urgent racial issues have been calling for official decision since the beginning of the defense program, with still no definite action taken by responsible Federal officials. This failure to act is not necessarily a reflection of inimical racial attitudes by agency administrators. It is sometimes a result of their smug certainty that "Papa knows best"—Papa being the Federal official in question. Paternalism is always a potential danger in the bureaucratic administration of government. The most sincere and intelligent officials are apt to become convinced of their infallibility in deciding questions of public policy. This tendency is accelerated when civil service or appointive tenure removes them from firsthand contact with the very people who have most to gain or lose in the administration of official policy.

This is sharply true in the case of officials dealing with questions on which the people themselves have not yet come to hold reasonable, intelligent, and consistent ideas. Those persons who make the error of regarding government as a fond

parent, administering to the needs of his children, fall squarely into a trap which has caught the people in present fascist states. In a democratic society, government is not the parent but the *creature* of the people. As such, government shows all the fineness and courage, but also all the meanness and cowardice of the people who created it. At our present stage of national growth, majority opinion in this country is admittedly ignoble and unintelligent on racial issues far more often than it is courageous and far-seeing. Under these circumstances, what hope would we have of developing a permanent governmental program to which we could safely trust the future of majority-minority relationships in this country?

The American government is political—and was intended so to be. Its political nature is one manifestation of the controls which the people exert upon it and must continue to exert in order to insure perpetuation of democratic representativeness. A political government has no permanent objective except that of self-perpetuation. It has no fundamental philosophic fixation except what it derives from the repeated mandates of the people. A government which is strong enough to effect special benign intervention in behalf of Negroes, Jews, or foreign-born groups is one which is also strong enough to operate with malign intent when so motivated. The fact that the New Deal has produced an administration generally sympathetic in its attitude toward "minority" groups should not blind us to the fact that we may have in any political tomorrow an administration as hostile as today's is friendly. The very difficulty with which the Fair Employment Practice Committee has been maintained, together with the difficulties encountered by the National Housing Agency, the Social Security Board, and other Federal departments which have attempted from time to time

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to meet their responsibilities squarely with respect to the Negro population—these should make all thoughtful persons aware of the precariousness of a governmental program that avowedly protects a disfavored group.

Congressional Appropriations Committee hearings have made it very clear that, for the present at least, any Federal bureau undertaking to attack the economic and social problems of Negroes can count on the bitter, unrelenting opposition of influential Congressmen and Senators—not only from the Democratic South, but also from northern Republican states. That opposition which today is a slyly watchful and hostile minority can tomorrow be a powerful majority that imposes its will upon administrative officials through its control of the government's purse strings.

Messrs. Collier and Padover suggest that their Institute of Ethnic Democracy "might well be placed within the Department of the Interior. That Department already administers, democratically, one important 'minority'—Indians—as well as our islands and territories. Secretary Ickes is known as a fighting liberal of vision and courage and this is a job that will require both vision and courage." By this one statement alone the authors invalidate their proposal. It is a job that would require both vision and courage, and certainly Secretary Ickes possesses both of those attributes to a high degree. But are the authors proposing that Secretary Ickes be permanently established in his job? Does their memory carry them back to the Harding administration, when a Secretary Falls was in charge of the Interior Department? Do they recall the scandals that characterized the whole administration of our Indian program until a comparatively recent period?

But aside from the general theory of sound democratic government, which is sufficient to damn this proposal, criticism

can be brought against the details of the program as set forth in the earlier COMMON GROUND article. Fortunately—or unfortunately—the war program has given us a taste of the kind of intra-governmental program the Institute would proposedly carry on, and Negroes, as usual, have furnished the testing ground which has already demonstrated the proposal's unsoundness.

During the New Deal, there has been built up in the Federal government a corps of "Negro advisers" in various agencies who have helped to develop racial policies in recovery, defense, and war programs. These advisers have been popularly known as the "Black Cabinet" and have been the subject of much comment, both friendly and unfriendly. As the war emergency became more and more severe, some departmental heads, and the White House as well, showed a tendency to veer off from direct attack upon problems of racial discrimination and to display irritation over the "pressure" exerted by these Negro advisers upon their superior officers. Negroes suddenly became aware of the fact that representatives of their own race were no longer advising the government to any important degree on matters of racial policy. Their place had been taken by a group of presumed white experts in race relations—sociologists, economists, publicists, and others who had had some exposure to the opinions of Negro intellectuals and who thereby assumed that they were capable of interpreting racial questions. Members of this "white cabinet on Negro affairs" attained a prestige that went far beyond their qualifications, and they actually established the "working relationship, by consultation and correspondence with governmental agencies and institutions" which is recommended by Messrs. Collier and Padover as a function of their Institute of Ethnic Democracy.

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The trouble with the arrangement was what might be expected. This "white cabinet" represented no one except the individuals included. Its real experience was slight; its proposals half-baked and often unwise. Its results were to misinform well-intentioned officials, or provide the ill-intentioned with shifty ways of evading issues, and to infuriate the Negro population which had already been dissatisfied with the results of Black Cabinet efforts. It would be hard to get any responsible Washington official today to admit that a white cabinet on Negro affairs still exists, but there is no denying the fact that Negro spokesmen within the Federal government have, to an important degree, lost their effectiveness. They have lost it because of the buffer group that has moved between themselves and the officials whom previously these Negro representatives advised to good effect.

The Collier-Padover plan also proposes that civilian administrators be trained in "democratic administration" and that the Institute "shall organize a pool of specialists to be available for consultation with or lectures to other agencies and communities that may need them." Here again we need not speculate on the probable effectiveness of such training and use of "ethnic specialists." The sad record of the Office of Civilian Defense in dealing with local communities and in co-ordinating or otherwise influencing governmental agencies should be a sufficient comment on the probable usefulness of a Federal bureau that tackles the toughest and most controversial social question demanding the attention of the American public.

America's majority-minority problem cannot be disposed of by the simple process of setting up a bureau for public education and conciliation. The problem stems from a basic weakness in our political and economic life. As long as the eco-

nomic structure of our nation sets groups within the population in fratricidal competition with each other, and as long as an outmoded and corrupt political system allows the control of government to remain largely at the disposal of reactionary power groups, North and South—just so long shall we do well to keep government itself on the fringes rather than in control of corrective action. Government has not used the formula it already has for alleviating the various forms of discrimination now practiced against nearly one-third of our population. That formula calls for the absolutely equal administration of the law and of the public services in all parts of the country to all groups of the population. Until this principle is accepted by the people who create government, until the government itself can be considered a safe instrument of democratic force, no minor bureau within that government can do much more than fatally confuse the issue. Its creation may actually establish patterns for iniquitous misuse of government and become an agent of, rather than a corrective for, group discrimination.

This is a difficult position to take, especially for one who belongs to a racial group which has suffered discrimination to a severer extent and over a longer period than any other group in the history of the American nation. And yet it is the only decision which can be made by a people committed to the democratic ideal. There is no short-cut to democracy. Democratic government is a process that begins in the hearts of men and is worked out as those heartfelt emotions are made operable in the processes of Constitutional law. Any attempt to avoid the difficult and tortuous road that we have traveled in the past will carry us into areas fraught with dangers far more terrible than those from which we are now tempted to flee. America's "minority" groups—Negroes, Jews, the foreign-born—have suffered much from

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the inequities of our imperfect social order. But that suffering should not lead them, or their friends, to sponsor methods of attacking their ills that are at variance with the philosophy and tactics of democratic government. "Minorities" cannot accept the status of wards of the Federal government, and at the same time demand equal partnership rights. To sub-

stantiate our citizenship claim we must repudiate wardship, however benevolent, and rest our hopes for the future in unremitting, undismayed battle against the forces of ignorance and bigotry.

Lester B. Granger is executive secretary of the National Urban League for Social Service among Negroes.

A NATIONAL AGENCY MUST HAVE AUTHORITY

LOUIS ADAMIC

THE Collier-Padover proposal for an Institute of Ethnic Democracy falls far short of the authors' insight into one of the basic problems of the 20th century: "the tragic failure of the democracies to face the 'race' issue domestically and internationally." In view of the landslide of world events, I am afraid the Institute, as outlined in the last number of *COMMON GROUND*, would be ineffective.

It has, I think, two main and related weaknesses: it lacks teeth and it ignores time. It would be an advisory, educational, long-range agency without administrative powers. "Gradualism" alone is not functional these days; it falls particularly flat among the "minority" groups on the receiving end of ethnic discrimination. A long-range program alone cannot prepare us soon enough to cope intelligently with the postwar world either here or overseas. As a matter of fact, the "postwar world" is being shaped right now. If at home we have not gone beyond accepting the poll tax, civilian and military Jim Crowism, concentration camps for Japanese American citizens, inequalities in housing, service, and employment based on race or

creed, we will inevitably tolerate their counterpart abroad.

The authors defend the absence of teeth by arguing that "action by government decree" would founder "on the rock of the present state of public opinion." But a function of the Institute is "to survey tension areas and prevent explosions." One wonders how this advisory agency without authority could "prevent" explosions, especially in tension areas. Obviously it could not expect public opinion to support it if public opinion is the rock that would wreck action by government decree.

The authors apparently feel this contradiction. They state that "first of all . . . the government must have a clearly formulated, far-sighted, courageous 'minorities' and race policy. It must have democratic goals." If the Institute were backed by, or were part of, such a policy, if new legislation were enacted where necessary, and existing laws vigorously enforced by Federal, state, and local authorities, we could get somewhere. The Institute would then be a solid nucleus active enough to attract much individual goodwill and en-

ergy now going to waste because many people who want to do something about the problem don't know what to do. It would also attract some organized support in schools, churches, clubs, unions, the press, and radio.

I have a suggestion to make. Collier and Padover say: "The Soviet Union has solved its racial and ethnic problem wisely—by preaching and practicing genuine equality of opportunity for all of its citizens, regardless of their color or racial origin." It might be sensible to find out just how they did it. Perhaps we could use only a few of their methods; or perhaps we could use many. For one thing, Russia

respects and encourages the various cultures of her many "minority" groups. For another, any discrimination based on ethnic differences is severely punished by law ("government decree"). But the Soviet government must have succeeded too in enlisting public opinion, for without it a huge country cannot in one generation equalize the material and psychological status of "minorities" with "the majority."

Louis Adamic, former editor of Common Ground, is one of the leading authorities in the country on the makeup and potentialities of America's people.

A RESEARCH AGENCY OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT

WILLIAM H. HASTIE

ALL of us are indebted to Messrs. Collier and Padover in that their formulated proposal of an Institute of Ethnic Democracy has stimulated critical discussion of methodology in our approach to "minority" problems. Beyond that they have emphasized two great needs in this field: (1) a center for scientific research and publication, and (2) the education of civil administrators so that they may be equipped with basic understanding and essential skills when they face problems of ethnic relationships in their work.

There should be a center of learning and research in which these relationships would become the principal and essential business of a group of first-rate scholars and where domestic and foreign experiences in this field would be organized and evaluated. To me it seems all-important that this be the extent of the responsibility of such an Institute. It should not be bur-

dened with or influenced by any responsibility for action. Such a limitation is an essential safeguard for its objectivity and its intellectual integrity. Men of action would be free to use and often would distort and abuse the emanations from such an Institute. Such is the inevitable variant between the products of scholarship and the devices of men in action. Yet research and analysis remain the most valuable guides and correctives for action.

It seems a serious mistake to place such an Institute within government. Responsible to the legislature for appropriations and inevitably influenced by problems of political expediency, the Institute would lose independence essential to its success. But removed both from government and from all responsibility for action, it would be of very great value.

Training in civil administration is a separate although vital matter. However,

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it is a mistake to consider the special training of administrators in "minority" problems apart from the entire business of training for public administration which we have neglected. The further development of outstanding schools of government administration and the directing of more first-rate men and women into careers of public administration are all-important in any comprehensive planning for the future. The development of the study of ethnic problems in public administration should be an integral part of and a major concern in all such courses of study. Of course, the research and publications of the proposed Institute of Ethnic Democracy would supply invaluable material for use in such study and training.

The immediacy of "minority" problems may make us somewhat impatient

with Messrs. Collier and Padover, whose thinking is directed at long-range instrumentalities which can scarcely begin to be effective in the war period or immediately thereafter. Yet, if we merely muddle through the present period of crisis in race relations and fail to mobilize our intellectual resources for future planning in this area, we but postpone national and world catastrophe.

William H. Hastie is Dean of the School of Law of Howard University, former civilian aide to the Secretary of War. His resignation from that office last spring in forceful protest at continuing discrimination and Jim Crow in the Army won for him the Spingarn medal, awarded each year to the Negro adjudged to have done most for his race.

WE MUST CONSTRUCT OR DISINTEGRATE

JOHN COLLIER AND
SAUL K. PADOVER

LESTER GRANGER states: "A political government has no permanent objective except that of self-perpetuation. . . . A government which is strong enough to effect benign intervention in behalf of Negroes, Jews, or foreign-born groups is one which is also strong enough to operate with malign intent when so motivated. . . . America's majority-minority problem cannot be *disposed of* (italics ours) by the simple process of setting up a bureau for public education and conciliation. . . . 'Minorities' cannot accept the status of wards of the Federal government, and at the same time demand equal partnership rights."

One could supply added considerations, going beyond Mr. Granger's, to show why any perfect or complete action by our national Federal institution is scarcely to be hoped for in any matter, including race relations. One could mention our Constitutional and electoral systems, our civil service system, the immaturity of our social science, and the popular and Congressional resistance against social science.

Yet to pass from these circumstances to a despair concerning national Federal action and to adopt administrative nihilism as one's philosophy surely is a vain thing. It would be a vain thing even were our national political institution much

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more perverse or sterile than it really is. We cannot do without national political structure. And we cannot withhold from the national political institution, because we may be disillusioned about it, responsibilities which in the nature of the facts belong to it. It is suggested that race relations are such a responsibility, historically, now, and in the long and near future.

In truth, the Federal institution is better than Mr. Granger seems to believe. We mention some cases. One of these is the utilization of the principle of grants-in-aid. Certainly this principle has been misused, not only well used; but in many instances it has been very well used. Another instance is the work of the United States Public Health Service. If this work were examined in the area of venereal disease control alone, it would prove very impressive. Another instance is the Federal government's work in the conservation and equitable use of natural resources. That work has gone forward amid regional, economic, and "political bloc" resistances which are very great. It has gone forward across fluctuating administrations since Theodore Roosevelt set it in motion. It has included, in the case of the Soil Conservation Service, some of the most penetrating and applicable research work, social as well as ecological, which the world has known in this decade. Readers can supply other examples.

We quote Mr. Granger, above, to the effect that whatever Federal action were taken, the "majority-minority problem" can not be "disposed of" by relegation to Federal action. The "majority-minority problem" can not be disposed of at all; in forms malign or benign it probably is with us to the doom. But Mr. Granger is certainly in the right when he dreads any action that might take away from the individual, the local community, or the "minority" group itself responsibility for

race relations. In this matter I think he is needlessly fearful. The situation within the United States and in the world is such that preoccupation with race relations must grow; no stupidity of the Federal institution could stop it. Rather, this increasing preoccupation would chasten "bureaucracy" into trying to do a real job.

Before passing to another important point, made by Mr. Adamic and Mr. Hastie, we touch upon the subject of "wardship." When our Federal institution waged civil war and ended slavery, it was not in behalf of "wards." Rather, it was in behalf of values and principles central to our Federal institution and necessary for its survival.

Action of the Federal institution to make the Constitution and Bill of Rights effective, in terms of whatever "minority," is no imposition of wardship upon that group. Is the United States going to be true to itself? Is it going to behave internally in such a way as to make possible a useful behavior in the greater world? Is the United States to gain or to lose its soul? These eminently national questions confront the Federal establishment. Tenant farmers are not "wards," nor is any racial group. The term is misapplied to Indians. Is labor a ward, are women and children wards, are the beneficiaries of vocational education, through Federal grants-in-aid, wards, are the banks, now protected through deposit insurance, wards?

Now to the subject of a Federal organization, in the matter of ethnic relations, having or not having administrative or statutory authority. We suggest that were authority vested in such an organization, it might be for the good or not for the good, but it would be only a smaller part of a much bigger assignment.

We refer again to a Federal organization in another area, that of conservation. Soil Conservation Service, organized under

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Interior, now in Agriculture, wields only a negligible subsidizing power, and no authority at all. But it has modified the agronomy, altered the economic equations, and even, to a measurable extent, changed and improved the human relations, in perhaps a thousand soil conservation districts involving several million inhabitants.

There existed here a real and acute problem, of immediate and of long range. Light, and more light, was the answer sought by the Soil Conservation Service. Through drawing upon natural ecology and human ecology, the Service found this light and radiated the light, and many millions of people changed their practices and changed their horizons because they had light. The concepts and the technics of the Soil Conservation Service are practically worldwide in their relevance. Not noisily like the race struggles, but in a deadly silence, the soil resources necessary for the future life of the whole human race are being thrown away needlessly and, in the most immediate sense, uneconomically.

We suggest that racial tensions and struggles, like natural resources, are a field for discovery. They probably are the world's top problem in terms of immediacy and permanence. Social science is beginning to be applied to these racial tensions and conflicts, which supply much of the positive dynamic which moves us toward a future that can be predominantly evil or predominantly good according to the sort of values and knowledge and effort applied to these tensions and conflicts. It is no policy of "gradualism" to suggest that a critical increase of intellectual energy applied to this subject is possibly the greatest instant need.

There then remains the doubt as to

whether, realistically speaking, the Federal government would be politically allowed to take the lead in getting light and shedding it in race relations.

But this same question can just as reasonably be applied to the problem of monopolies. Again, right now there is a many-sided and widespread drive to compel the Federal institution practically to get out of the field of conservation. There is a more diffuse drive, expressed in a thousand ways, toward paralyzing the Federal institution as a thinking agency, a discovering agency, and an agency in behalf of national destiny. Are these many converging tendencies and drives to be allowed to prevail? In race relations, the Federal government is here and now profoundly involved—historically, politically, and legalistically. In all of these fateful matters, shall the United States continue to construct or shall it disintegrate? Millions upon millions of people need to ask this question and to answer it. The subject of race relations within the Federal institution inevitably falls within its scope.

John Collier is Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and Saul K. Padover is Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior. In proposing an Institute of Ethnic Democracy in the Autumn 1943 issue of this magazine, they spoke as concerned Americans, not as government officials.

The proposal has stirred much discussion, and CG will welcome more. It must be borne in mind that the Institute was suggested as an overall approach to the human resources of America, to concern itself with the problems and potentialities of all the national and racial groups that make up our population, not as a Bureau of Negro Affairs only.

ADOBE CHRISTMAS

DOROTHY L. PILLSBURY

WITH much of the world these days talking wistfully of Brotherhood, we on the ancient adobe soil of New Mexico look at each other with a new interest. Can it be that we, plain folk of this arid mesa land, have at least the bud of that flower which learned commissions are so frantically hunting far afield? *Quien sabe?* But three races of us have been living as neighbors here for a good many years. We have scrambled our skills, our customs, and our arts until it is hard to tell what is Pueblo Indian, Spanish American, or Anglo.

Our Christmas is a striking example of this strange mixture. Our little town at seven thousand feet elevation lies cuddled in tawny hills. Behind them are mysterious black-shadowed mountains, thickly wooded with pine and cedar, with butterfly wings of snow on the slopes above the timber line. A frosty stream meanders almost through the back doors of our business houses. There is an old massive cathedral and a tiny nuns' chapel with Our Lady of Loretto on top, her halo and veil pricked out in blue lights for festive occasions. Most of our homes are of adobe mud, humble and low and flat-roofed like the houses in the Holy Land. We do not have a section for Spanish Americans and another for Anglos. We live cheek-by-jowl in our little adobe houses.

Back in sheltered pockets of our piñon speckled hills, shepherds still watch their flocks by night. If you are out that way, you can often catch the plaintive chant of old, old songs.

Christmas Eve starts at nightfall with the lighting of *las luminarias*—little pyres of piñon wood outlining driveways and the brick paths to bright blue doors. The first Christmas of the war I worried that there might be no luminarias.

"*Porqué—why,*" demanded my neighbor, Mrs. Tenorio, she of the long black skirts, gloomy rebozo, and decent black cotton stockings, "*porqué no luminarias?* Lots of old dead trees back in the montañas."

"But no gasoline to go after them."

Mrs. Tenorio snorted and bound her rebozo more firmly under her chin. She is a daughter of the Conquistadores. "Luminarias we had before there was any gasolina and before there were any carros. Lots of old wood wagons around Santa Fe and lots of horses. And lots of burritos," she added conclusively. "In the old days there used to be long strings of burritos plodding into town all summer long. They were so loaded with wood you could see only their little feet. Every stick of wood for all Santa Fe came in on the backs of burritos." (To this day we order wood for our three-cornered fireplaces by the one-burro load or the two-burro load, even if it is delivered in a ramshackle truck.)

True to Mrs. Tenorio's prophecy, we have luminarias in spite of *la guerra*—the war. The yards are full of them, with *los niños*—the youngsters—capering and singing in the red resinous light. And if we look up toward the hills, we see faint answering flickers where other luminarias

mark the way along tortuous dirt roads to bleak, lonely little villages. "Es bueno," approves Mrs. Tenorio. "El Santo Niño—the Christ Child—will be able to find His way."

We make dozens of paper sack lanterns. For months we have been saving every one from the grocery store. We fill them half full of sand from the arroyo and stick a candle in the sand. When they are lighted, the plain sacks turn into lovely parchment lanterns. With them we outline our flat roofs, our old adobe walls, and the archways into patios. The whole town is etched against the black winter sky with their mellow glow. The big tourist hotel and the poor mud home of Señor y Señora Martinez are equally resplendent. And out in the Indian pueblos, the same homemade lanterns turn the many tiered buildings into an unearthly bas-relief.

Lighted by the luminarias and the soft glow of lanterns, the narrow, crooked, high-walled streets of Santa Fe overflow with people—white-leggined, black-shawled, or fur-coated—all bound to see *El Santo Niño* in His Crib. The old cathedral has an elaborate manger scene, as does every

Anglo children stand around the Crib and sing of The Star of the East and God Rest You Merry Gentlemen. Little Spanish American children are lifted up by black-shawled grandmothers to kiss the foot of the smiling, rosy Babe. Little Indian children, led by white-booted mothers, bring their gifts of the soil, blue corn and golden squashes.

There is no incongruity to us in Santa Fe in going from the Crib of *El Santo Niño* to the pagan Indian dances on Christmas Eve. The road to the age-old pueblo is dark and ghost-filled. Only an occasional luminaria and the brilliant New Mexican stars light the way. There is no light anywhere in the pueblo except for the paper sack lanterns on the roof tops, no sound. The church where the dance is held is just another massive shadow in the darkness. You hesitate to open the great, hand-carved door. Only pin pricks from a few scattered candles light the black interior. The floor is bare. The freshly whitewashed walls are bare. The altar is a black void. A pot-bellied, red-hot stove seems to be the only living thing.

Suddenly the great door swings open



whitewashed church for miles around. Even the deep window sills of private homes show the old earthy story of a baby and the animals from the barnyard. Some of the attendant saints and angels are strange hand-carved wooden figures which came in cow-hide chests hundreds of years ago down the adventurous trail from Old Mexico.

with a blast of icy wind. The wailing of a ceremonial drum comes closer. Dancers and spectators file in. Not a word is spoken. Moccasined and bare feet surge and retreat on the hard-packed adobe floor. There is the hiss of rattle gourds and the monotone of wild chanting. Something deep buried in your consciousness comes alive. Mentally you join the danc-

ing. Surely the two-foot-thick walls are swaying and buckling. Any minute now the whole building will collapse. Hour after hour these dances of ancient America keep on in a Catholic church, a Catholic church that breathes of 17th century Spain.

It is midnight. An altar boy in a red cassock lights, one by one, dozens of candles on the high altar. It comes brilliantly to life. Indians, who but a minute before had been dancing to their god of the sun, drop to their knees. Spanish American ranchers, in from their arid acres, tell their rosaries. Anglo ranch families open prayer books. History has hurriedly flipped a ghostly page.

In the back of the church in the choir loft sit rows of Indian women with red, purple, and orange shawls over their heads. Nearly every one has a sleeping baby in her arms. Each lights a candle and puts it on the hand-hewn plank in front of her. They sing the old liturgical music of the ancient church. It is the hour of midnight Mass, the Mass of the Cock, the Spanish call it.

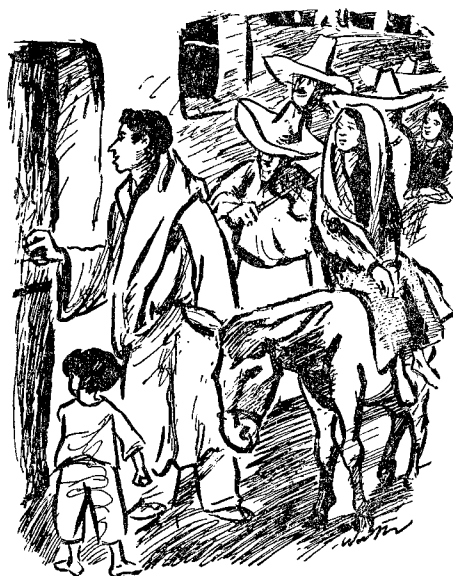
Christmas afternoon there is much visiting back and forth in the little adobe houses. Mrs. Tenorio, unfestively swathed in her perpetual black leads a procession of niños—Lupe, Manuelito, Pepe, Esteban, Josefa, Teresa, and Inocencia. Mary Ellen, Patricia, and Junior have evidently deserted the Smith family celebrations to try a party with a little wider scope.

"*Feliz Navidad—Merry Christmas,*" they chorus politely, evidently under stern instructions. Then, as the blue door closes behind them, "*Bonito, muy, muy bonito—pretty, very, very pretty!*"

An adobe house was made for Christmas decorations, not formal garlands and wreaths, but simple branches and clusters of our native short-needled pine and pink-berried mistletoe. They practically arrange

themselves along rough ceiling beams and against plain whitewashed walls. The winter woodland contentedly moves indoors and you almost expect to see a spotted faun in front of the fireplace.

Mrs. Tenorio is full of yesterday's visit to her cousin who lives back in the montañas in one of the little villages where



life goes on much as it did almost four hundred years ago, where everyone still speaks the 17th century Spanish of Cervantes.

"Si," she describes it to us, "they have it every *Nochebuena*—Christmas Eve—just as they did when I was the size of Josefa. A man dressed to look like the pictures of Saint Joseph leads a little grey burrito. And on the burrito's back is one of the village girls wrapped in a blue shawl. She is the '*Veerheen*'—Virgin. Behind them follow the village people, men, women, and niños. There is music from fiddles and guitars. They go from house to house. Saint Joseph hammers on the door and asks if there is any room for them there. And the people in the house say '*No*' and slam the door hard. At every

ADOBE CHRISTMAS

house the people say 'No.' But they keep on going, trying every house. They come to a poor little house and Saint Joseph hammers again. The people say 'Yes, enter.' They all go in, and there is much music and dancing and feasting."

The niños are not interested in yesterday's processions. They wiggle and twist on their chairs. We start old Anglo games—Spin the Platter and Going to Jerusalem. The little house rocks with laughter and shrill screams. *Mamacita*—little mama—sits by the fire and thinks of the snowy village of her childhood. But when the surprise of the afternoon is brought in and fastened high up under the ceiling, she jumps from her chair and exclaims with the niños, "*La piñata, la piñata!*"

La piñata is an olla or water jar made of thin Mexican pottery. It is festooned with pink and blue and yellow tissue paper and has dingle dangles of tinsel and colored beads. In turn each niño is blindfolded and whirled around until he has little sense of direction. With a long pole he makes wild stabs at the piñata hanging from the ceiling. Lupe misses it. Patricia misses it. Junior just grazes it. Finally little fat Inocencio makes connections. Broken pottery flies in all directions and out pour apples and oranges, candies, nuts, little toys, cakes, and pop corn. The niños scramble like chipmunks gathering piñon nuts.

After the party I sit by the "three-stick fire" in my indoor woodland and think of the strange, lovable part of our country in which I live. First the Pueblo Indians were here, living much as they do now in their sun-burnished, many-storied buildings. Then came the Spanish in the wake of the crested Conquistadores. There was conflict and bloodshed. The Conquistadores moved on, but the people stayed. They brought with them the domestic animals, the horse and the sheep and the

burrito, which the Indians had never seen before, but which they soon adopted into their own way of living. It was a fair exchange: it is doubtful if the Spanish could have survived in this strange, almost rainless region without the skills learned from the Indian—how to plant and irrigate, how to build mud houses, how to prepare the very food they ate.

And we Anglos, who acquired both Indians and Spanish by the stroke of a pen at the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, we have had our lives enriched by both these ancient cultures and skills. There is much left for us to do to square the account. Old wrongs must be righted and new helping hands must be extended. But the fact remains that we are pretty good neighbors out here on our shining mesa land. Our lives have become pretty well interwoven—homes, food, language, art, customs. It hasn't been accomplished by laws or social workers or learned commissions. It is a folk movement as natural as the melting of our winter snows or the spring flowering of our wild plum trees. We need each other.

There is a rustling under the window. The niños are back to say *gracias* with a serenade. They sing *Home on the "Rain"* in English and the Marines' song in Spanish. And then comes

Noche de paz

Noche de Amor

It is *Silent Night* in Spanish. Out on our high mesa land it is a night of peace, a night of love. The blue piñon jay is chuckling sleepily in the cottonwood tree. His chuckles are all in Spanish.

This is Dorothy L. Pillsbury's second article in COMMON GROUND on the mixed culture of Santa Fe. Her "Ancient Adobe Soil" appeared in the Summer 1943 number.

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

WHEN TWO CULTURES MEET

FRANK G. NELSON

MOST writers who discuss the 19th century Norwegian immigrants' contribution to American life stress pretty much the same points. They begin with a tribute to the virtues of the Norwegian pioneers. Then, often after a passing reference to quaint survivals of the Norwegian language in certain communities in the Middle West, they dwell at length upon the number of churches, hospitals, colleges, orphanages, and homes for the aged which had their origin in Norwegian initiative. Finally, they call attention to the fact that there are now approximately three million Americans of Norse descent—a few more than there are people in Norway itself. And to clinch their point that the Norwegians have been a most valuable addition to the life of these United States, they list all the prominent Americans, living or dead, who come of what they invariably refer to as "this sturdy Viking stock." All of which is true, but casts very little light upon the question as to what elements in our national culture are peculiarly and uniquely Norwegian in origin.

I mean no disrespect to the memories of the Norwegian settlers of the West when I say that the qualities for which they are most often praised are not exclusively Norwegian virtues. Most of the men and women who broke the sod of the prairies were honest, hardworking, and God-fearing people, whatever their national origins. And their battle to establish new homes in the New World was the common experience of all immigrants. The greatness of O. E. Rølvaag's classic

novel of pioneer life is that in portraying the life of a Norwegian family on the plains of South Dakota the author gives us a picture of what happened to the souls of all the millions who came overseas and built America. The characters in *Giants in the Earth* are first of all universal human types and only secondarily Norwegians; that is why all Americans of pioneer stock can read the book as the story of their own first parents in America—whether their ancestors suffered loneliness and fought the wilderness at Plymouth, in the forests along the Ohio, or in the Czech settlements of Nebraska.

The isolated communities where a Norwegian patois is spoken in the third generation and *lutefisk* appears on all Christmas tables have not been of much significance in the national scene. It would be strange if a few such communities did not survive, since whole townships in Minnesota and the Dakotas were settled almost solidly by Norwegians fifty or seventy-five years ago. But they represent only little puddles left high on the banks after the main flood-waters had receded. The overwhelming majority of Americans of Norwegian descent merged long ago in the main stream of American life. And even these forlorn remnants of the great Norwegian migration of the last century are disappearing rapidly. The average age of the subscribers to Decorah Posten, the oldest and largest Norwegian language paper in the Middle West, is well over fifty years. The last living links with Norway in the upper Mississippi Valley will

soon be gone, now that Norwegian immigration has dried up almost completely.

Much has been made of the Norwegian American religious, educational, and charitable institutions which were founded in the last century and which are flourishing today. The fact is, however, that they are not particularly Norwegian, except in name and sometimes in the accident of language. In most respects they are exactly like similar institutions founded by old-stock Americans. Where they do occasionally differ from the standard American pattern, the distinguishing feature often turns out to be historically more German than Norwegian in origin. For the chief organizational force in the rural Norwegian settlements was, of course, the church, just as it was in most frontier communities; and only those Norwegian American organizations which were closely linked to it seemed to have vitality enough to survive into the second generation or even to weather the change of language in the first. Unfortunately, the Norwegian Americans for years had no colleges or theological schools of their own in the United States but sent their candidates for the ministry to a very conservative seminary conducted by the German Lutherans of the Missouri Synod in St. Louis, where even the primary language of instruction was German. The good Germans of St. Louis were primarily interested in religious doctrine, not, of course, in crowding out Norwegian culture in favor of German; but early leaders of the Norwegian American communities often left the seminary with little knowledge of Norwegian literary traditions beyond the Catechism and the hymn book. What was even worse, these pioneer clergymen were frequently indoctrinated with a definite hostility toward all liberal ideas—Norwegian, American, or even German. Thus the Norwegian American churches and schools which they founded

were at the outset given a negative mental set which has in many ways prevented their serving as an effective link between the best in Norway and the best in America.

A handful of exceptional men have, to be sure, made definite positive contributions to American culture through the medium of these institutions: notably F. Melius Christiansen and his St. Olaf's choir in the field of choral singing, and the late O. E. Rølvaag, also of St. Olaf's College, in literature. But, by and large, the Norwegian American institutions have been culturally sterile, if not entirely barren—as far as developing Norwegian traditions in this country is concerned. Very often, indeed, the meager intellectual fare of dogma and Catechism which they long presented as the essence of Norwegian culture made the best young people from Norwegian American homes identify Norway with everything they did not like and resolve to have nothing to do with it.

Very recently, a new spirit has been apparent in Norwegian American churches and colleges, thanks in great part to the tremendous admiration Anglo Americans have had for the New Norway the past few decades, as well as to the impact made upon their thinking by the German invasion of the "old country." But, as yet, this new spirit has not made itself felt in America at large.

Because of their German American theological tradition which long discouraged fellowship with those not of the same strictly orthodox faith, the influence of Norwegian American institutions has largely been limited to those of Norwegian birth and descent. Even among them only a small minority of the American-born today have any connection with the churches and schools or other institutions which bear the Norwegian name in America. From the beginning most of the immigrants from Norway in the last century

tended to break away from their fellow-countrymen and lose their identity in the American community.

Probably no immigrant group ever found it easier to do so, in spite of their great numbers. In everything that really mattered they were very much like old-stock New Englanders when they arrived; nothing in their appearance or social traditions formed any barrier to easy assimilation and rapid intermarriage. They were Protestants, distinctly well-washed, had as much book-learning as the average American of their time; their political heritage of active participation in local self-government was almost identical with that of the old-time Yankee. The result is, that for a group of three million people, the Norwegian immigrants of the last century and their descendants have left amazingly few external and visible marks on American life. Probably not one out of ten of those born here speaks even a few words of Norwegian, attends a Norwegian church, sends his children to a Norwegian college, or subscribes to a Norwegian newspaper. When the American Army raised a battalion of Norwegian-speaking troops for special service in this war, the military had to fine-comb the country for enough qualified men to fill it. At that, a good part of the men in the so-called "Norwegian Battalion" are Norwegian-born—some of them boys who escaped Norway after the German invasion. So thoroughly have the American young people of Norse stock identified their interests with those of the country of their birth rather than Norway that before Pearl Harbor there were far more American volunteers with Norwegian names serving in the RAF and the RCAF than there were native Americans of Norwegian ancestry who even bothered to write letters of inquiry to the Royal Norwegian Air Force training at Little Norway. The descendants of the Norwegian pioneers are, for the most part,

simply Americans; and it is absolute drivel to imply that because they happened to have Norwegian grandfathers their so-called "Viking blood" played any decisive role in the careers of such typical Americans as James Cagney, Joe Foss, Senator Ball, and Gypsy Rose Lee.

As a matter of fact, one is tempted to dismiss the 19th century Norwegian contribution to American culture by saying that the immigrants added a few bits of local color to the Middle West and through their churches and schools slightly reinforced certain conservative tendencies of German origin, but that otherwise their chief service has been to strengthen the old Anglo American tradition with which they have almost completely identified themselves. In other words, the Norwegians in America at first glance seem to have been just one more scoop of the original ore added to "the melting pot"—excellent though that ore may have been.

The striking similarity between modern Norwegian and modern American living and thinking makes it all the easier for one to assume that the Norwegians were simply imported Americans who brought with them nothing really new to the American scene—except their names, which they often hurried to Anglicize. Probably no people in the world (with the possible exception of the Canadians) are more like us than the people of Norway; there is actually less real difference between life in Oslo and that in either Boston or Los Angeles than there is between life in these two American cities.

But this similarity between life in 20th century America and Norway is not just an independent parallel development of two cultures already very much alike in the early 19th century. There has been, thanks to the presence of Norwegian immigrants in these United States, a fine

interplay and exchange of ideas between the two countries which has made possible this similar development from similar origins.

A few years ago, for instance, President Roosevelt referred to Norway as a laboratory in which many of our social and political reforms were worked out. That has certainly been true. But at the same time, many of the ideas behind the reforms came originally from America at a time when America was not always ready for them, and then returned here after they had been nurtured in Norway for a generation. Similarly, America has served as an incubator for ideas which appeared prematurely in Norway. The germs of ideas which sprouted too early to develop in the one country were able to flower time after time on the other side of the Atlantic, because the spiritual soil and the intellectual climate were the same; only the season of the year was different.

Often it is hard to say which country was the first to conceive the ideas, since the ancestry of ideas and social developments cannot be traced on charts and genealogical tables.

Take for example, the modern concept of social and political democracy.

When Norway achieved independence from the Danish crown as a result of the Napoleonic wars, she was much in the position of the United States after the Revolution: a country of farmers, fishermen, small artisans and tradesmen, and homespun intellectuals, with an old tradition of local self-government but with little experience in national affairs. When the delegates sent to Eidsvold in 1814 met to draw up a Norwegian constitution, they had to look abroad for models and found three that provided them with exactly what they needed: the Constitution of the United States and those of the first French and Spanish Republics which were inspired by it. But Norway was not

ready, as this country had not been ready in the time of Washington, to put the full democratic implications of that Constitution into force. Norway had no feudal aristocracy, but she did have a ruling caste of country squires, government officials, and clergymen very like that of New England in the first post-Revolutionary years. Not until large-scale Norwegian emigration began in the '30s did the poor people of Norway begin to question their authority. Then letters from relatives in America telling of golden opportunities on this side of the Atlantic started a ferment in every isolated mountain valley. Over in "Juneiten" no one needed to eat sour milk and herring and black bread in Christian meekness and humility. Hans Olsen's boy who ran away from home had become a judge, and—think of it—the Widow Larsen's youngest had a farm so big you wouldn't believe it if I told you! Men began to ask themselves and then one another: "Why can't things like that happen in Norway?" The seed of revolution had begun to sprout.

But Norway was not ready for widespread social change even yet, and often the malcontents found it wiser to migrate to America than carry on the fight at home. Many men like Markus Thrane, Norway's first great labor leader, came here.

No one has ever, as far as I know, made a thorough study of Thrane's later years in the Norwegian settlements of the Middle West. America was only a little more tolerant toward such men than Norway had been, even though he was not thrown into prison for talking and writing. Norwegian American parsons warned their flocks against him as an emissary of Satan, and their American colleagues would probably have done the same had they understood his language. His ideas seemed to fall on barren ground. But a generation after Thrane's death, such labor move-

ments as the I.W.W. sprang up in the very regions where he had done his work.

The I.W.W. and similar movements were eventually crushed by the reaction which set in during and after the last war. They were premature even for America. But in the meantime they had influenced a number of poor young Norwegian immigrant boys who returned to Norway, which by that time was more hospitable to such notions than it had been in Thrane's day. Among them was Johan Nygaardsvold, now Prime Minister of Norway, who had worked as a section hand on one of the railroads of Montana. The program of the Norwegian Labor Party which Nygaardsvold and others put into effect in Norway before the German invasion was profoundly influenced by the experience of earlier American labor leaders who owe much to Thrane, as well as by the thinking of Thrane's later disciples in Norway itself. Nor is the story finished there: the program of the Norwegian Labor Party is in its turn influencing political thought in America.

The story of women's rights is very similar. The first Woman's Rights Congress was held in Seneca Falls, New York, back in 1848. But in this country the whole idea of woman suffrage was a joke for years. It became a reality first in Norway, thanks in great part to the work of a woman named Aasta Hansteen, who had spent eight years in America in the '80s. Only after the women of Norway and the other Scandinavian countries had had the ballot for a generation and had proved it did not cause all women to wear trousers and grow beards did we finally accept the idea in this country.

Literary relationships between Norway and the United States are a fascinating chapter, which I can barely touch upon here. The social plays of Ibsen are, of course, the foundation of the modern American drama; they, not Shakespeare,

finally provided us with the models we needed to catch the rhythm and conflict of the modern world. And their ideas have become an integral part of our national culture.

Ibsen himself never visited America and I doubt if he ever read an American book during his formative years—except possibly *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Yet his plays make it plain that he regarded the new ideas brought back to Norway from this country as a fresh breeze clearing out a stagnant atmosphere. Lena Hessel, the woman in *Pillars of Society* who comes home from America to "clean house," is the first of his great revolutionary heroes and obviously modeled on Aasta Hansteen or someone like her. The world premiere of *Ghosts* in Norwegian, incidentally, was an amateur performance put on by a little group of immigrant radicals in Chicago, at a time when the ideas it contained were regarded as too hot for the public stage in either Norway or America.

Ole Bull, half a generation before Ibsen, had actually visited America and became almost as much a legendary figure here as in Norway. Both the New England intellectuals and the plain people of the West felt the impact of his music and his personality. And, while he was not a writer, he was one of the quickening influences which made possible such divergent literary works as Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, too, visited America and made almost as great an impression on the Bostonians who were the custodians of American culture at that time as had Ole Bull. It must be recorded that Bjørnson's whirlwind lecture tour of the Norwegian settlements of the West was hardly a pleasure for anyone concerned. He tramped on toes and wounded dignities at every turn, and the language he used to express his opinion of his audiences in a famous post card sent from Albert Lea,

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Minnesota, will not bear public repetition. But in such later works as *Daglandet*, the positive things he observed among some of the Norwegian immigrants in America find clear expression.

When the American writers discovered Knut Hamsun and his successors a couple of decades ago and took them to their bosoms, they were adopting highly illegitimate literary descendants of two of America's own greatest writers. Hamsun, who has always been hopelessly wrong as a thinker and always right as an artist, lived in the United States as a young man long enough to write a treatise damning Emerson and Whitman, yet his classic Norwegian style clearly shows the influence of both! Similarly, the new American literature which owes so much to the older Norwegians has already begun to make its impression on the contemporary writers of Norway.

One might multiply examples endlessly in nearly every field of life: music, engineering, architecture, manufacturing. Large scale canning began in Stavanger and reached its fullest development in California. Skiing, of course, came from Norway, and Americans have added little to the sport; but the figure skating which Sonja Henie perfected in Norway and popularized over here came to Norway originally from America.

In short, the intimate association between Norway and America has been one of the most fruitful elements in the culture of both countries—all the more so because it has been a natural and almost unconscious process made possible by the essential similarity of Norse and American civilization and by the presence in America of so many Norwegian people.

The impact of the war will undoubtedly bring about still newer relationships which will leave their mark on future develop-

ment. Because their culture is so much like our own, the Norwegians have been able to put their country's cause before the American public much better than any of the other occupied lands. And the interest in Norway which has thus been awakened will not die down overnight.

Among the Americans of Norwegian descent, especially, the war in Norway already has wrought a great change. Mid-western isolationism, which was particularly strong in the little out-of-the-way prairie communities, has suffered a telling blow, thanks to the Norwegian speakers who went out to the region before Pearl Harbor to tell Norwegian Americans what the war was about and who brought the message home to their purely English-speaking friends and neighbors as well. The Norwegian American schools and churches have at last begun to awaken to their cultural responsibility. And the completely Americanized descendants of the Norwegian pioneers who a generation ago were entirely indifferent to their origins are now discovering that being of Norwegian blood is just as romantic as springing from Jamestown or Plymouth Rock. "Norwegian blood," I said, not "Viking blood," for the people of modern Norway are the ones who appeal to an American's imagination today.

Frank G. Nelson is a Missourian, of mixed old American and very early pioneer Norwegian stock. Dr. Nelson has taught at the Instituto Politecnico de Puerto Rico and the Municipal University of Wichita, Kansas. American Guest Professor of English at the University of Oslo at the time of the German invasion of Norway, he has been connected with the Norwegian Information Service in this country since his return in 1941 on a diplomatic exchange.

GEDICHT DER DANKBARKEIT

PAUL H. OEHSER

There, along that river where Hamburg lies,
Which once was a free city but now
Smolders in death and fire and despair:
There by the Elbe where long ago
The boy Mendelssohn heard his first music . . .

There in that land where terror now spills its blood
Like the raging waters of a mighty flood,
And there is no escape, and no pity in high places . . .

There might I too have been born
Had not my grandsire one Sunday morning
Seen a clear vision in the western skies
And, holding his young wife and children by the hand,
Prayed to his and Martin Luther's God
To bring them safely to that promised land—
America.

And what is there that can contain my gratitude?
Because I am of that new land, older now by a hundred years
Yet still new, where Freedom again reclaims her birth
In travail, valor, sacrifice, and tears
And lends back her million sons
For the lost peoples of the earth.

Paul H. Oehser is editor of the United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institution, editor of the 12 volumes of the Proceedings of the 8th American Scientific Congress, and a frequent contributor to newspapers and literary and scientific magazines.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR AMERICANS

EDWARD E. GRUSD

MAGAZINE and other writings should, I suppose, answer questions that people carry around, consciously or otherwise, in their heads. Some years ago I was only too ready with all the answers. But after one passes a certain age, the flaming affirmations of yesterday sometimes dissolve into anxious questions, and instead of making assertions the writer finds himself issuing queries.

In this article I intend to ask a lot of questions and answer none. Yet the questions will not be rhetorical; they will be sincere and earnest attempts to raise issues in the minds of the readers, the only ones who can answer them in the long run.

The reason for these questions is simple. For many years I have heard and read statements by a very large number of people—many of them with all the appearance of the most crushing authority—statements to the effect that America is a symphony of people, that cultural pluralism should be the American social and cultural ideal, that the nations from which the American people originally came are all silver chords and sources of inspiration to the sons and grandsons of the immigrants. More, that the national or racial ties between Americans and the birthplaces of their ancestors must continually be strengthened and renewed, that only in this way can the various groups make their maximum contributions to America, and that otherwise American society will be all of one dull shade, without richness or depth.

It is a widespread ideal, although not

so widespread as its proponents would wish. I have heard it propounded by college professors, by Babbitts at service club luncheons, by ministers, and over the radio. As long ago as 1937, in an interview for my magazine, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt told me: "Each 'minority' has great and precious gifts, as a people. Those gifts should be part of our common heritage. Each group should have all the freedom in the world to develop its own culture to the fullest extent of its ability. In doing so, the individual members of the group are immensely benefited, and the entire American community also gains."

This national or racial identity, call it what you will, has been greatly stimulated in the United States since the German fascists began to overrun Europe and enslave its peoples. Some second- and third-generation Polish Americans who for years had had no interest whatsoever in Poland or in any possible relation of themselves to that country suddenly became inflamed with strange and unwonted sentiments when they heard of Hitler's rape of Poland. The same happened to some Greek Americans, Czech Americans, Dutch Americans, and others. Grandchildren and even great-grandchildren of immigrants—men and women who were American-born of American-born parents, with no knowledge or particular affection for the language, history, or people of their ancestors' homelands, became aroused. They were stirred not solely on general humanitarian grounds at the spectacle of Nazi bestiality, but specifically on grounds having a direct

relation to themselves. Hitler had enslaved the Polish people, and they were—Poles? Well, not exactly. They were Americans, but Americans of Polish descent. Hitler's blow had sideswiped them on its way to its mark.

Although this phenomenon of anomalous racial or national reawakening as the result of the war has been far from universal among descendants of the enslaved peoples, it has been widespread enough to become a kind of new gospel in many circles. Even American Jews, among whom the question of whether they were a people, a nation, or merely a religious community has been a century-old issue for debate, have been so deeply stirred by the tragedy of European Jewry that a really representative American Jewish Conference early in September went overwhelmingly on record in favor of demanding a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. Some of the delegates (and others) were afraid such a stand might be misunderstood by the world at large as indicating divided loyalties, and many of the speakers at the Conference devoted their energies toward exploding this false idea. One of them, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, a member of the Executive Board of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, put it this way:

"The Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, legally and politically, will be the Commonwealth of those who are there—then there will remain the great Jewish diaspora with Jews living as equal citizens in their countries, with their primary loyalty to those countries, but with a moral and spiritual interest in the Palestinian Jewish Commonwealth. This will not be anything extraordinary. Dozens of peoples are in the same position, and were one to doubt the loyalty of every American citizen who belongs to a group which has a country or state of its own somewhere in the world, I do not know how many loyal Americans would remain. Czechs and

Poles, Irish and Italians, Germans and Frenchmen, and all sorts of people coming from various parts of Europe, living as loyal American citizens, whose loyalty no one would dare to doubt, have shown interest and sympathy for their countries of origin, and have expressed it by words and deeds. The position of the Jewish citizens of various countries would be in no way different from these other groups."

Underlying the assumptions of the above statement, of course, is a deep belief in the value of having loyal American Jewish citizens take "a moral and spiritual interest in the Palestinian Jewish Commonwealth." And the assumption would naturally hold for having loyal Polish American citizens take "a moral and spiritual interest" in the Polish commonwealth, so to speak. And so for the Italians, the Czechs, the French, etc.

Those who believe in the value of such an interest point out, for instance, that Judaism, and Jews as a historical group, have developed cultural and social and religious standards of the very highest type, and particularly with regard to democracy. It is obvious, therefore, say they, that for an American Jew to cultivate the totality of his Jewishness is for him at the same time to become a better American, if by that is meant a believer in a more meaningful democracy. And if a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine dedicates itself to the refinement and development of Judaism and Jewishness, it will actually be a source of social justice and peace and all the other ideals for which Judaism has always stood. In that sense, the American Jew can drink from its life-giving waters with incalculable benefit both to himself and to America, and be not less, but actually more American for it.

In the same way, they say, the American grandson of a French settler can draw inspiration from the noblest French traditions without in any way having his loyal-

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ties as an American divided. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity are universal aspirations, and the French people have no monopoly on them, just as the Jewish people have no monopoly on the concepts of peace, social justice, truth, etc. But the particular form of the slogan, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*, originated in France; French history and literature have their own peculiar expressions of these concepts; and altogether the French contribution to this universal field constitutes something recognizable, distinct, and valuable. Similarly, the particular form of the Bible, the Prophets, and in general what is called Torah, grew out of the bosom of the Jewish people, out of their history and experience, and is therefore stamped with their personality and peculiar genius. This does not mean that similar ideals cherished by other peoples are inferior, or that Jewish ideals are not universal among the vanguard of other groups, but it does mean that the Jewish contribution to civilization, like the French, is something recognizable, distinct, and valuable. And, they argue, when one goes on down the line and defines the nature of other racial and national contributions to world culture and world evolution, an American who adds his own ancestral background to his current American foreground is infinitely richer and potentially capable of a more significant contribution to America than one who has cut himself off from his background.

So much for the basis of my questions. Now to the questions themselves.

Granting the value of cultural pluralism, is it a feasible technique in America? Is the present "background consciousness" on the part of so many American descendants of immigrants permanent, or transitory? Will their present emotions die away forever when the terror ends in Europe, leaving them again cold to what they

were cold to a few short years ago? Or will their present experiences be stamped on them indelibly, so that after the war they will do something about them?

Do the conditions of American life lend themselves to the development of "a symphony of peoples," forgetting for the moment the abnormal circumstances of the war? Specifically, with Irish and Germans and Negroes and Jews and Christians and all the rest lumped together in simultaneous exposure to exactly the same schools, the same newspapers and books and magazines, the same movies and the same radio programs, the same employment and living conditions, the same developing history, and the same position as citizens of the greatest industrialized society on earth, is the kind of differentiation suggested above possible, however desirable?

Is it not true that the 1920s ended an era, and that we are now at the beginning of a new and different era? Specifically, did the freezing of immigration in the 1920s not alter forever the nature and composition of the American people—assuming that unlimited immigration is a thing of the past? Is it not true that before 1920 American society was continually enriched by the addition of countless newcomers, who brought with them the customs, the viewpoints, the very tang of the Old World, and that since 1920 these old-timers have been dying off, leaving in their stead American-born children and grandchildren who each generation become less distinguishable from each other? Is it not possible, therefore, that in time—in 20 years, or 50 years—every person in America will have been born and reared in America, that there will be no "immigrants," that we will stand at the beginning of a period during which we will be producing, as the result of "the melting pot," an absolutely new and unique phenomenon in the world, namely, a typical American, just as today there are such

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things as typical Frenchmen, typical Germans, typical Chinese, etc.? Or are the various strains that presently make up our society capable, either "naturally" or by certain efforts we can consciously make, of retaining their individuality, as the Amazon River is distinguishable for hundreds of miles out in the Atlantic Ocean?

The cultural pluralism now flourishing in Russia immediately comes to mind, but insofar as the idea there may be succeeding, is it not due to the fact that, by and large, the various peoples of the Soviet Union live together in compact groups, each with its own territory, language, newspapers, customs, mores, traditions, etc.? Is anything even remotely similar to the results achieved there possible here, where a Negro, a Catholic, a Jew, a Protestant, a Chinese, and a Turk may all live in the same territory or city, or even on the very same street?

Is it not true that the nations of the world, as we know them today, are all the result and product of centuries of infinite racial admixtures, gradually fusing into recognizable norms? If that is so, could not the United States be considered, as a comparatively young country, to be at the beginning of a long history which will end up by producing a recognizable American type, rather than the present "symphony of peoples"? Is this not an inevitable evolution, based on the social and educational influences indicated above—an evolution which it is futile to try to thwart? On the other hand, is it possible, that despite the forces of assimilation, which through the generations tend to standardize the American type of thought, custom, and even food and appearance, the standardization can be defeated, so that the rich social tapestry now being woven by Americans of French, German, Italian, Russian, Irish, Jewish, and Negro origin, and all the others, will not degenerate into a monotonous pat-

tern? If so, how—by education, exhortation, example, planned social arrangements?

Or is it possible that those who advocate cultural pluralism within a single country are mistaken, and that it is feasible and natural *only as between different countries*, after all the nations of the world more or less "catch up" with each other in their economic and social development? In other words, is the ideal design global rather than national, with *each country* making its peculiar national contribution to *world civilization*, rather than small groups within any one country making their contributions to the civilization of that country?

These are honest questions, to which I, certainly, do not pretend to know the answers. Some of us who have been active in this whole general field may, with all due respect, know a little less about it than we give the impression of knowing.

The answers are important. If one answer is given, it follows that many of our present efforts are in vain, that perhaps we should shut up shop and save our time, energy, and money. If another is given, it follows that we are on the right track, and should feel encouraged to go on. Perhaps no definite answer is possible. In that case those of us with convictions will each act in accordance with his own beliefs, hoping for the best.

But whatever we may do let us be aware of the problem—that there is a problem—that it is not cut and dried—that it is foolish to be dogmatic about it one way or the other—and that on this problem hangs a considerable portion of the future and fate of the entire American people.

Edward E. Grusd is editor of *The National Jewish Monthly*, published by B'nai B'rith, and author of an earlier article in our pages, "The Jews: Fact and Fiction," Spring 1943.

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND INK

LOUIS MARTIN

LUCIUS squinted his big brown eyes and half smiled as he looked me up and down, taking my measure, slowly, carefully.

"You're one of these college boys," he said for the twentieth time, and his smile broadened as he reared further back in the creaking swivel chair which his vast frame dwarfed.

I laughed a little, but I was not at ease. I wondered what thoughts were running through his fat round head. He had read some of my stuff on the Chicago Defender, and I had misgivings. Before I could think of anything to say, he went on:

"Now, kid, I know you've got a solution to the race problem. I haven't seen one of you college newsboys who didn't. But, you know, if you really want to do some good, you've got to get to the people first; you've got to make this sheet go. And remember, newspapers are sold—you don't give 'em away."

That was seven years ago in June of 1936. Lucius Harper was the executive editor of the Chicago Defender, and he had taken time out, two months to be exact, to start the weekly Michigan Chronicle in Detroit as a subsidiary of the national paper. The "green sheet" was printed on the Defender presses on Wednesday and shipped overnight to Detroit for distribution on Thursday. The system had worked for the Defender paper in Louisville, and Publisher John Sengstacke said it would work for Detroit.

Lucius did not preach. His parting instructions were casual comments made in

his friendly "voice of experience" manner. For more than twenty years he had held one important position after another on the staff of the Chicago Defender and his experiences were rich indeed.

I had learned earlier that the Negro newspaper like the rest of the American press is of necessity a business enterprise, and its existence is contingent upon ends meeting. Lucius' farewell warning that newspapers are sold and not given away is of special significance to the Negro newspaper, which is not generally accepted as a desirable medium by the big advertisers. The largest and most powerful Negro newspaper in America runs hardly any important ad copy, despite elaborate efforts to sell the big advertisers on what is called the two-billion dollar Negro market. It follows, too, that the Negro press is therefore far more influenced by the temper of its readers than the viewpoint of its advertisers.

Lucius gave me the keys to the one-room office and the roll-top desk as he was about to leave. "If you want some help, kid, drop me a line," he said and added, half laughing, "From now on it's your baby." Indeed it was.

The Chronicle was nine weeks old and was selling less than 1,000 copies a week. For the first few days our staff included me and any literate person who happened to be in the neighborhood on Tuesday, which was the deadline. I had learned that while newspapermen are rare, if you scratch a preacher, doctor, or lawyer, you will find a "journalist." Since Mr. Seng-

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stacke had warned me, quite unnecessarily, that the Chronicle was a shoe-string adventure, I began to scratch around me from the first day.

After a few weeks of rewriting the notes I found on the blotter at police headquarters, covering civic affairs, and rounding up "journalists" to write reams of wind, I began a methodical study of reader appeal. With a few carefully selected newsstands for my laboratory, I sought somewhat scientifically to determine the relative sales value of various news headlines.

The Chronicle was usually sandwiched in with several other weeklies on the stands, and the customers invariably looked them all over before making the decision that was so crucial to our little enterprise. I soon discovered that a bold-face headline of a murder was worth twenty headlines on such affairs as the opening of the membership drive of the local YMCA. I found, too, that all the world loves a pretty girl three columns wide. It seems that Mr. Hearst discovered this a little earlier, however, because the Detroit Times, which outsold the other dailies two to one in these districts, carried a fresh scandal in banner headlines every morning, accompanied with pictures of rare intimacy.

While we could not keep pace with the Detroit Times, we found it a very profitable experiment to devote at least one of our three or four headlines to life in the raw or death in the afternoon. Murders were running three a month that summer, and we could always wind up our stories with the moral, implied if not expressed, that crime doesn't pay.

In order to win also those friends and influence those people who insist that news must be good, although they read the murders too, we balanced the rain with sunshine. We carried at least one headline on some story of Negro advancement—the first Negro to get some coveted

municipal post, or the first Negro to sit on a jury in some benighted county. While we could depend on our own community for the rain, often we had to range the country over for our sunshine. These experiments enabled us after a few months to boost our circulation and build up the Chronicle reading habit among at least 4,000 citizens.

By September 1937 we were incorporated under the statutes of Michigan, and while the Chronicle was still printed on the Defender presses, we became legally independent of the Chicago paper.

II

The newcomer to Detroit soon begins to recognize that the auto industry dominates the life and spirit of the city, and there is no escaping the influence of those who pull its strings by day or night. When the plants close down for their annual conversions to new models, a pall covers the town, and after a week or two the clerks in the department stores begin to read those long novels which always have a happy ending.

I found early that, while the city at large was affected by the ebb and flow of the shining autos, the Negro worker, never secure at best, suffered the worst fears over the length of his vacation. He knew his future was filed away in a steel cabinet in the personnel office of his company, and he wondered if he would be lucky enough to be called when production started anew.

There were always thousands of unlucky ones, but even for those who got their telegrams to report to work there was another question. How many days a week would they work? Often for the worker, the answer to this question determined whether he would lose his home to the bank or whether he would be able to send the boy to school. Everybody knows,

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the joke goes, that even the Detroit River frequently shifts its schedule and sometimes runs only three days a week.

There was a lot of talk of a union back in 1936—a new kind of union which welcomed Negroes along with whites and which promised higher wages, seniority, and better working conditions. I heard this talk, too, and, like the boys in the shop, I began to speculate on the possibilities of a new deal for the thousands of Negro workers who swept the floors and fed the furnaces of the great auto industry.

With our Chronicle circulation growing, and with new-found confidence in our own ability to make the sheet go, this union talk began to take shape as a Chronicle pattern. I had seen at first hand the subordination of men to machines. I saw workers literally crushed by a system over which they had no control, their lives dependent upon the whims of a straw boss. I saw the patronage system at work where a letter from the right man landed you a soft job and the word of another would throw you in the street. I saw how Negroes were subtly pitted against whites, and native Americans against the foreign-born.

Many Negro leaders who had “friends” in industry were opposed to this union talk, but the workers told me the leaders were always opposed to changes which inevitably brought an unpredictable future. The workers were not afraid of the word reform, and they welcomed support. I talked with the leaders of this new union movement and debated the issues out. Thereupon we began the long campaign to win over the masses of the Negro people to the union way of life.

The daily press blasted the United Automobile Workers of America as a threat to free enterprise and branded the leaders as Reds from Moscow hell-bent for revolution in America. These phony stories, however, could not stem the tide of un-

rest among the thousands of workers in Detroit. They knew their grievances were legitimate; they organized and prepared their strikes. Following the great General Motors sitdown strikes, new heroes were born among the workers, black and white. The tide was turning and the motor magnates began to see that this new union was coming to stay as an integral force in Detroit and Michigan's industrial life.

The pro-labor platform of the Michigan Chronicle won thousands of new readers among the workers, many of whom had never regularly read a Negro newspaper. By 1940 we were safely above the 15,000 mark with some little prestige and influence, and we began to enlarge our staff and move to larger quarters.

III

It was about this time that I hired our first genius. Bob “Shakespeare” Hayden had worked on the Federal Writer's Project in Detroit and he had won a Hopwood Award for verse out at the University of Michigan in the summer of 1938. Born near the corner of St. Antoine and Beacon in the heart of the celebrated ghetto that we call Paradise Valley, Bob appeared to be something of a cultural accident. His thick glasses early made him a pedant, and while the Valley kids hung on the tailboard of the brewery wagons, our Bob sat alone with his books and grew wise.

I had some misgivings when Bob took over the rewrite desk in our city room. He would come to work in the morning with a thin volume of T. S. Eliot in one hand and something of John Donne in the other, and there was always a broad smile on his banana-yellow face. Despite the apprehensions of some of the boys on the staff, it did not take Bob long to prove that he was a regular guy.

Affable and business-like, Bob attacked

his rewrite job and translated those illegible news items in the morning mail like a veteran. He had very positive ideas about the future of industrial workers, and he believed that culture was the right of the masses. He wanted to bring beauty into the slum, and he wanted to distill some of this beauty into dactyls and pentameters on the front page of the Chronicle. Week by week this passion grew, and I knew at last that a crisis was impending.

On the advice of Omar Leatherman, a summertime printer, I had bought a job press and stuck it in the basement of the house which had become our office building. Omar had heard of a printer who was going back to tropical Georgia, and he urged me to buy his outfit, for, as he said, "It was dirt cheap." It was, and I made the deal.

With Omar idle and Bob rhyming half the news, it occurred to me that we might publish a book of Hayden's best work. The notion struck us all as a step of great promise which might pay wonderful dividends in cash and certainly in the community's culture. With a poet and printer at hand, the book required only a modest investment in special ink and paper stock. Thus it was that in 1940 we published the first book of poetry by a Detroit Negro in the memory of all those we asked about it. Bound in yellow cloth, our slender volume bore in Roman type the title, *Heart-Shape in the Dust* by Robert E. Hayden.

It won kind reviews in the local dailies and got encouraging notice from the New York autocrats. Bob's longest poem, "These Are My People," was chanted around the countryside by various choral groups.

Today Bob is lecturing at the University out at Ann Arbor and is writing a new book of poetry which Doubleday Doran has contracted to publish.

IV

Shortly after Pearl Harbor we became engaged in the first major housing controversy in which our newspaper was to play a significant role. For months on end we had protested the frightful housing conditions of the city of Detroit and campaigned against the powerful realty interests who were opposed to Federal-built housing. With the country now at war and thousands of war workers living in rat-ridden slum dwellings, the Federal Housing authorities at last decided to brush aside the opposition and proceed with projects long planned.

A site was chosen in sparsely settled North Detroit for a 200-unit housing development which became the famous Sojourner Truth Homes that precipitated what the daily papers called a riot in February of 1942. White residents in the neighborhood were led to organize in opposition, when it was announced that according to Washington's and Detroit's Jim-Crow plans Negro war workers would occupy the homes. The white realty interests contended that permitting Negroes to live in this area would be a violation of the racial restrictions of the neighborhood. They were able to influence Congressman Rudolph Tenerowicz, in whose district the project fell. Even the parish priest wrote Washington of the moral threat Negroes would bring to the North End community.

We on the Chronicle pointed out that the site was only four blocks removed from a long-established Negro settlement; that racial restriction on land was an abridgement of our Constitutional rights besides. We exposed the deal by which Congressman Tenerowicz, in agreement with poll-tax Congressmen, had forced the government temporarily to deny occupancy to Negro war workers, many of whom had already signed leases. On the basis of his part in these machinations, we were able

to wage a successful campaign to retire Congressman Tenerowicz to private life in the subsequent elections.

The Sojourner Truth victory, which was won despite Tenerowicz and the efforts of a mob organized by men who are now under Federal indictment for sedition, brought us thousands of new friends among Negro and liberal white citizens of Detroit. It was only half a victory, however, for although the restrictions in the neighborhood were waived, the project remained Jim Crow. We contend that Federal money obtained from taxes levied upon all citizens without discrimination should not be used to build great projects designated exclusively for the benefit of one race or another. Let those in need who come first be the first served.

V

In the wake of the great war effort many new problems have come to Detroit and the old ones have been aggravated. Over 400,000 new people have found their way here, and their cousins are following after. The Chronicle has grown with the populace and today we boast a circulation of 25,000. The struggle of our newspaper for a better deal for Negroes in industry, in the armed services, and in civil life has continued with increasing difficulty. Hate strikes have been called against the up-grading of Negro workers which has been made necessary by the shortage of skilled manpower, and there is popular resentment over every incident which seems to indicate that Negroes are "getting out of their place." There is widespread fear, which is exploited by powerful fifth columnists, that the Negro may emerge from this war both free and equal.

I have discovered that it is a cardinal sin to some Americans for the Negro newspaper to compare democratic practice with democratic theory. We have

been denounced for laying bare injustices and accused of "rocking the boat" by calling attention to the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic charter. One white reader wrote us, "You ought to know that the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence was meant only for white folks." Nevertheless, we have won many white friends who have dared to believe that democracy is something more than a catch word for foreign ears alone. White writers are frequently represented in our columns, and our readers enjoy them.

Like most weeklies, our working week is telescoped into three furious days before the deadline and, like a standard daily, we attempt to cover the waterfront. To carry on this crusade we have gathered about us over the years a staff of some little distinction.

Russ Cowans, our city editor, who as Joe Louis' first secretary sought to introduce the Bomber to the literary life, does double duty on the sport page, where he reminisces over the exploits of the dusky heroes of sport he knew years ago when Satchel Paige was a baby. He was recently appointed to the State Boxing Commission by Governor Kelly. Larry Chism, our crime reporter, who gave up writing "true" stories which the magazine editors would not believe, has found time to launch a War Widow's club among the wives of servicemen, who help in the war bond drives. John Wood, who covers civic affairs in the town, wages war against juvenile delinquency. He has organized youth groups in various sections of the city and reports that he will tackle the parents next.

One of our columnists, William Sherrill, was an emissary of the late Marcus Garvey to a conference in Geneva following the first World War, when the dark Generalissimo sought to have certain African territories turned over to his Universal Negro Improvement Association. Another

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of our columnists, Horace White, is a Congregational Minister who has been State Representative and is now the only Negro member of a municipal commission in the city. The Chronicle's Phi Beta Kappa book reviewer, who sometimes gets into controversies with the authors, wields the most important influence over our editorial policies. And she insists she should because, among other things, she is the editor's wife.

Like the majority of Negro newspapers we on the Chronicle have dared to take the American ideals off the shelf, dust them off, and put them on display. We have dared to ask for more than lip service

to these ideals and to uncover those incidents in our national life which do not square with them. Like moral gadflies we have been stinging away at the American conscience, and the fact that the Peglers are squirming may be a tribute to our effectiveness. And this, in the last analysis, is our only excuse for existence as a Negro newspaper.

Louis Martin analyzed the causes of last summer's race riots in Detroit in "Prelude to Disaster," in our Autumn issue. The Chronicle is published at 268 East Eliot Street, Detroit 1.

WHITE FOLKS DO THE FUNNIEST THINGS

LANGSTON HUGHES

ALTHOUGH Negroes laugh at many of the same things white Americans do, they also laugh for *different* reasons at different things.

Some incidents of Jim Crowism which I personally have experienced have amused me more than they have angered me—due, as nearly as I can analyze them, to their very absurdity. For instance, once I was driving south from New York to Richmond. An hour or so below Washington those of us in the car became thirsty and someone suggested stopping at a roadside refreshment hut we saw ahead. We knew we could not eat or drink inside—since there is “legal” Jim Crow in Virginia—but it was my intention to purchase a few bottles of soda and bring them out to the car.

When I went to the door and put my hand on the knob, it did not open, al-

though I saw a man just inside. I pulled on the door again and discovered, to my amazement, that the man was holding it. He shouted through the screen, “What do you want?”

I said, “I’d like some sodas.”

He said, “You get ’em through the hole.”

I said, “What hole?”

He said, “We got a hole cut for niggers on the side.” And he continued frantically to hold the door as though I were a dangerous savage intent on murder. I went around the side of the little frame building—and there, sure enough, was a square hole cut in the wall through which colored people were served! I did not buy, but I had to laugh! Who could help it? Almost within the shadow of the Capitol of American democracy, a little two-by-four roadside shack had cut a hole in its

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wall through which to serve Negroes. A colored person could not even come in the door. That seemed to me so absurd as to belong in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Another time in Savannah, Georgia, I wanted to buy a copy of the Sunday New York Times and could find it nowhere in town except at the railroad station. In the colored Jim-Crow waiting room there was no newsstand, so I went outside on the sidewalk and around into the white waiting room where I bought the Times without incident. But, coming out of the station, just at the door, a white policeman stopped me and said, "You can't come in and out of this front door."

I said, "But there is no newsstand in the colored waiting room!"

He said, "I don't care nothing about that! You can't come in here."

"O.K.," I said, "I am going out now."

"You can't go out this door neither," said the cop.

Well, that puzzled me, as there was no other way out except into the train sheds. "I just came in that way," I said.

"Well, you can't go out that way," said the cop. "Niggers can't use that door."

"How do I get out then?" I asked.

"Only way I see," said the cop, seriously, "is for you to walk the tracks."

So, in order to get out of the Savannah station with the New York Times, I had to go through the train gates and follow the railroad tracks to the street crossing. I had never experienced anything so absurd before in my life. The seriousness of that cop and the utter stupidity of being at a door but not permitted to go through it, kept me laughing all day. I grew up in Kansas, so the absurdities of southern Jim Crow were new to me at that time and unbelievably quaint.

Once, when I was about eighteen, I was coming up from Mexico City to attend school in Cleveland. I went into the diner one evening as the train was heading north

through Texas. I was seated alone when a white man came in and sat down opposite me. I looked across the table and saw that he was staring at me with a look of utter amazement. Suddenly he jumped up as though he had been shot and cried, "Why, you a nigger, ain't you?"—then fled from the dining car as though he had sat down in front of a lion by mistake. I am still laughing at the incident and I suppose the waiter, who saw it, is still laughing, too.

As many Negroes as there are in Texas, what is there about one at a table in a public dining car that can so startle a white man that he runs away wild-eyed without his meal? Certainly the comedy of Jim Crow in action often outweighs the tragedy of so pathetic a mind as that man possessed.

But by no means is everything funny about Jim Crow. Once I had to wait for hours before driving my car onto a ferry boat in Louisiana because, each trip, all the Negro cars had to wait until all the white people's cars drove onto the boat. By the time the ferry crossed the river and returned, more white cars had gathered, so, each time, for several trips, the white cars filled the boat. Since the Negro cars had to fall back to the very end of each newly formed line, we were continually left ashore. That was not funny. I was due to lecture at a colored college a hundred miles away that night and I wanted to get there on time. Jim Crow caused me to be late.

It is like that now, soldiers tell me, in regard to bus service for colored Army men at some southern camps. If the white soldiers fill the bus, the colored soldiers must wait for the next one. By the time another bus comes, enough white soldiers have gathered to fill it, too—so again the Negroes must wait. Thus it goes, until sometimes the colored soldiers never get to town at all that night. Their passes run

out with them still waiting at the gates of the camp for space in a bus. That, of course, is not funny either. Soldiers writing home about these insane inequalities at democratic Army camps don't seem amused.

Of late, Negro humor has taken on a kind of macabre quality in relation to the race problem. When I speak of Negro humor, I do not mean it in a purely racial sense; what I do mean is that, due to environmental factors, namely segregation, Negro humor at this stage of American society has certain nuances that seem to be missing in white humor.

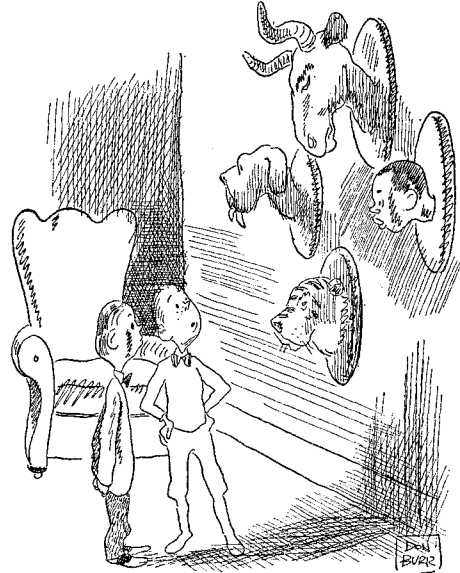
At the moment, some pretty grim stories, albeit told laughingly, are going the rounds. Some of the cartoons in the Negro press have this macabre quality, too. After the Detroit riots there was such a cartoon in *The People's Voice* of New York. It was funny. Lots of Negroes laughed, clipped it, and sent it to friends. But no white person, out of a dozen or more to whom I showed it, smiled.

This was the cartoon. Two little white boys are standing looking at one of the boys' father's collection of hunting trophies hanging on the wall of Papa's den—an elk head, a tiger head, a walrus. There among them, nicely mounted, is a human head—a Negro's. Proudly, the small son of the house explains, "Dad got *that* one in Detroit last week."

The late Robert Russa Moten, President of Tuskegee, world's largest Negro school, once told this story at a student assembly when I was present. Dr. Moten said that he had just come down from the North, and that he had taken a Pullman as far as Atlanta, Georgia. He said that as he stepped from the Pullman in the early morning in the Atlanta station, he suddenly heard a scream behind him. He turned, saw that a woman had caught her heel in the top step of the train and was

falling forward. Naturally, his first impulse as a man was to reach out his arms and catch her—but when he looked up and saw that she was a white woman, he dropped his arms.

At this point in his story the student audience roared with laughter. Every one



PEOPLE'S VOICE, JULY 3, 1943

Dad got *that* one in Detroit last week.

of those colored kids knew that for a black man to catch a white woman in his arms in Atlanta might mean a lynching party. Naturally, Dr. Moten dropped his arms! The woman landed head first on the concrete platform. At any rate, she did not have a chance to cry, "Rape." So Dr. Moten lived to tell the tale—which amused his audience no end. But somehow I could not laugh. It seemed to me one of the saddest stories in the world.

There is at the moment, a tale being told in Negro communities that seems well on its way to becoming a folk story. It is always told as being true, but within the month I have heard it in three varying versions, and as having occurred in both the North and South. The gist of it

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is this: Among those standing on a bus crowded with both white and colored there is a Southerner who cannot bear to see white folks stand and Negroes sit, so the Southerner says to a Negro in a nearby seat, "Hey you, black boy, get up and let me sit down."

The Negro rises and the white man takes his seat. Whereupon the Negro sits down on the white man's lap, presses a knife to his ribs, and says, "So you want to sit down, huh? So you make me get up? Well, now you're sitting down! And so am I! Say something! Go ahead! Say something!"

At this point, colored people, hearing the story, rock with laughter. Naturally, the white man with a knife in his ribs, says nothing, so the Negro rides to his destination on his lap! Thus Justice triumphs, and everyone is tickled.

A new folk hero is developing among the Negro people. He is not a soldier hero on the war fronts of New Guinea or Italy. He is the man who fights back on the local front of American Jim Crow. New tales come into being about him every day. Some are true stories spread by word of mouth or printed in the Negro press. Some are obviously fantasies—like that of the black man on the white man's lap. Almost all are touched with the heart-stopping humor of Jim Crow—desperately and grotesquely funny.

The colored papers not long ago carried an item colored people read with laughter. It seems that on the Jim Crow cars in the South, crowded as they are, white conductors and news butchers often take up a whole pair of seats with their paraphernalia, to the exclusion of the passengers. Some colored soldiers who were standing in the crowded aisle put the magazines of the news butcher and the ticket box of the conductor on the floor and sat down in their seats. When the conductor came and saw what had happened, he ordered

the soldiers out of the seats immediately. The soldiers would not rise. The conductor said, "All right, I'll put you bad niggers off the train." He reached for the cord. Whereupon the colored soldiers grabbed the conductor instead—and threw him off the speeding train into the night. This story amused the colored public no end.

I suppose environment creates varying nuances in regard to humor. Certainly there is nothing funny about a man being thrown off a speeding train in the middle of the night—not if he is a good man. But that particular conductor, in Negro eyes, was a devil—and everybody enjoys seeing a devil get his due. The devil-getting-his-due thinking is what conditions many Negro minds in regard to our current war with Japan. Negroes know that white people in Asia have had an attitude toward the Asiatics not unlike their general attitude toward colored people in America. That accounts for the deep belly laughter that greets such jokes as the following:

A distinguished Negro member of the Black Cabinet (whose function is to advise Washington on problems of color) was in session with a big official of the government during the days when Japan was beating back the British in Asia. That afternoon his colored office boy, unaware that he had a visitor, rushed in and shouted jubilantly, "Boss, we just took Singapore!"

Another joke of the same vintage concerns the white man who came to a Negro church in the South to speak for the Red Cross—which Negroes do not respect very much since that organization began segregating Negro blood in its blood bank. The white man made a most passionate speech about the evils of Hitler and Hirohito in the course of which he said, "Why, you know, these Japs are really trying to wipe us white folks off the face of the earth."

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A dark and wrinkled old grandma in the amen corner who had known seventy years of Jim Crow said, "It's about time!"

These are the kind of anecdotes that currently amuse black America. New ones are being born by the minute. Their humor is based on the absurdity of white Americans giving freedom and democracy such a grandiose play, while still selling Negroes strawberry sodas through a hole, or threatening to throw black soldiers off a train for objecting to the outrageous conditions of the southern Jim Crow car, or putting our blood in separate cans a la Hitler at the Red Cross blood banks. Negroes think democracy's left hand apparently must not know what its right hand is doing.

When the daily papers recently published the news about the President signing a bill granting freedom to the Philippines, a colored man in front of a newsstand at 125th Street and 8th Avenue in Harlem held up his paper and laughed loudly.

"We ain't even got the Philippines,"

he said, "and here we are grantin' 'em freedom! White folks do the funniest things!"

That statement I would qualify thus: Some white folks do the funniest things! Personally, I know that not all white Americans practice Jim Crow at home and preach democracy abroad. But what puzzles me about those who do is their utter lack of humor concerning their own absurdities. I have read that Hitler has no sense of humor, either. Certainly, among Hitler's hunting trophies today are thousands of human heads, scattered across the world in the bloody mud of battle. I suppose the greatest killers cannot afford to laugh. Those most determined to Jim Crow me are grimly killing America.

Langston Hughes, internationally known poet, is an old friend of COMMON GROUND readers, a frequent contributor to its pages, and member of its advisory editorial board.

WHEN I WAS IN KNEE PANTS

ARTHUR P. DAVIS

DURING my boyhood, a number—not all, by any means, but a considerable number—of the “first colored families” of Hampton, Virginia, lived in our section of Lincoln Street. Save for two or three exceptions, we were a little homogeneous group of the town’s “better” Negro citizens; but the “second families” crowded in upon us from both sides.

Among us were the community’s most popular physician, the best fisherman, two ministers, and three postal employees. Measured by white standards these occupations may seem menial to form the basis of class distinction, but one must bear in mind the peculiar structure of small town Negro society. In Virginia, class distinction is not wholly a matter of position, or of wealth, or of education. All three are important, of course, but class division is really a relationship which cannot be categorically described. The dominant factor is family; one is either a “somebody” or a “nobody and didn’t come from nothing.” It is a very simple distinction and one that was applied with swift and unerring decisiveness in our social appraisal of both Negroes and whites.

Since we were the “somebodies” of the town, we naturally had a few advantages denied to the less favored Negroes. And though there was never any overt snobbishness on our part, we were just a bit conscious of being “upper class”—not that we ever used the term. It was therefore only natural that to some of our acquaintances up and down the street, we were nothing but a bunch of “dicty nig-

gers”; and this they never failed to tell us whenever occasion arose.

Actually, in our daily living, we never drew any sharp lines of distinction. For one thing we were all Negroes and therefore brothers in misery. We had a common bond of oppression which made us spiritually somewhat closer than the poor white and the aristocrat. Any distinctions were subtle and often unconscious. It was mainly in little things we differed; otherwise our pattern of life was much the same as that of our up-the-street acquaintances. But these little things were of tremendous importance.

For instance, we tended to avoid loud clothes; we did not slick our hair with too much grease; we never talked blatantly in public or clowned before white folks. We studiously avoided shelling peas, eating watermelon, or combing the children’s hair on the porch. Such acts classed one, we were taught. Highly decorous in all things, our parents disapproved of “shouting” in church and all other emotional excesses. And when they had their differences, they fussed discreetly behind closed doors so that the neighbors could not hear them. They never lost control so completely as to end up in police court. We scrupulously avoided all involvements that would end there. It was not merely a case of being law-abiding citizens: courthouse contact put one in a certain group.

Food formed another tenuous basis of distinction among us. Although we ate pig’s feet, hog maw, lights, chitterlings, and other plebeian delectables commonly

though erroneously supposed to be enjoyed only by Negroes, we ate them in a spirit of conscious condescension. We made little jokes and boasted about having them just to show our superiority and, of course, enjoyed them enormously. For most of the poor people of the town, fish was the main staple of diet. Many a child brought a smelly but substantial fish sandwich to school for lunch. But we did not. If there was no other sandwich material at hand when we left for school, we had to come home (walking three miles round trip) and eat that fish there. Never, under any circumstances, at school! That would have been "too ordinary."

And we were all shy of any form of charity. Around on Locust Street, Mrs. Barrett, the town's lone social worker, had established a community house for Negro children. Periodically she received barrels of clothing and toys from charitable northern whites to be distributed among the poor and needy of Hampton's black population. The evenings on which this material was given out were festive occasions. We would go around and watch, but we dared not share in the activities. "Don't you bring none of Mrs. Barrett's junk here," had been the parting admonition when we left home. I can remember many a much-needed garment or fascinating toy that went to boys around me. To accept any of them would have meant a good whipping when I got home. At such times it was inconvenient to be "somebody."

Foolishly proud? Yes, for most of us were poor as church mice, but it was part of the code. During the Depression years, I visited in New York one of my boyhood neighbors from Lincoln Street. She was having a tough time trying to make ends meet. I found she was eligible for relief. When I suggested that she apply for it, she was hurt. "We ain't used to charity," she said with simple dignity. I understood and apologized.

Owning one's home was another shibboleth among us. A person who rented was somehow felt to be lacking in the qualities that went into the making of a real man. First of all, if you rented, you had a collector (usually white) facing you every Monday morning. And if you fell behind in payments, the collector put a "For Rent" sign on the house. "I could never stand that," my mother used to say, and shudder at the thought of such a humiliating experience. As a matter of fact, my people and most of their neighbors never really owned their houses, because they seldom finished paying for them. They too were renting from the finance companies. But, in fairness, I must confess there is a difference between buying and renting—if not an actual, then at least a spiritual difference.

Although the children of our neighborhood did not need to work to help the family budget, as was the case only too often in other sections, among us it was considered a good thing for a boy to "hustle." It showed he had some "get up" about him, and it helped develop his character. By "hustling" we meant the making of extra change through one's own industry and ingenuity. And there were many ways for a boy to make an honest penny. The only one that was frowned upon was shining shoes, which for obvious reasons was considered low.

We collected and sold scrap iron, brass, copper, zinc, and rags, the latter often with a full-sized brick inside the bag to add weight. I never tried that trick but once, for when I boasted of my cleverness to my father, he whipped me soundly. The Old Man felt that such habits would lead inevitably to the penitentiary, and they did, alas, in the case of one of my playmates, but that is another story. Bones, too, we sold, aided in our collecting by the stray dogs of the neighborhood

who stole them from the "dead horse yard." We also collected and sold cinders and coal—by the peck: for the former we used to get five cents, for the latter from ten to fifteen cents, according to the buyer. Much of our coal was secured in an unorthodox manner (the orthodox was to steal it from the railroad tracks near the unloading station, but we were a little too well-reared to do that). We "wormed" ours from beneath the wire fence of the town jail which was just back of our street. Often the inmates taking air in the jail yard helped us by throwing big lumps over the fence. I shall always remember the size of the coal used by the city, because one day an over-co-operative prisoner threw a piece which landed squarely on the top of my head. It was A-1 anthracite.

Whiskey bottles, too, used to fetch good prices at Mr. Curtis' and Mr. Dick Lee's barrooms on Queen Street, and we were always certain of getting an ample supply on Monday mornings from Miss Y— and Miss Z—, two of the "sporting ladies" who lived up the street. Bottles secured from our more respectable neighbors were usually old, dirty, or greasy, having either been empty a long time or used for turpentine or linseed oil or some other household necessity. They consequently required much washing and scrubbing to prepare for sale. But the bottles from the two ladies mentioned above needed only a quick rinsing and they were ready for Messrs. Curtis and Lee. I ought to add by way of parenthesis that we were accustomed to "dreeneing" (i.e., drinking the last few drops) the liquor remaining in the bottles. I was addicted to this habit until one day I inadvertently dreeneed, with most disastrous results, a bottle containing turpentine. From that day to this, I have been wary of liquid residues.

In addition to our extra-curricular hustling, many of us had after-school or part-time jobs. For an interval of several

months I sold peanuts and popcorn in the Alhambra, the more respectable of the two local Negro movie houses. I am afraid I was not an honest salesman. Instead of filling the bags completely with peanuts, I filled them only to the three-fourths mark, then, putting the sack to my mouth, blew it up and screwed the top in such a manner as to hold the air. Through this means I was able to give the bag that sales-inviting swollen appearance irresistible to the real peanut-lover. But my patrons were not fooled; they soon began asking me for a bag of air and somehow considered the whole matter a good joke at their expense.

In the summer of 1917 I had my best paying job. As water boy on a construction job in Newport News, I made \$2.25 per day, which was not bad pay for a lad still in grammar school. At first there were two water boys, a white one for his race and I for the Negroes. The white boy was a "hill-billy" from the mountains of North Carolina—the most typical I had ever seen—barefooted, tow-headed, blue denim-clad, illiterate, and fascinatingly lazy. I am sure he must have suffered from pellagra or hookworm, for his indolence was definitely pathological. He really lacked the energy to move around the building to get out of the sun. But he was not a bad sort; I enjoyed his companionship because he could play tunes on a harmonica. The foreman and the timekeeper, however, one of Irish, the other of Italian descent, were from New York and had no patience with southern mores. After a week they fired him. I had to carry water to both the white and the colored, and in deference to Jim Crow the foreman made me use two buckets. I then altered this plan and carried one bucket and two dippers. But since I was never sure which was the colored and which the white, I threw one away. Nobody seemed to notice the difference.

To me the most delightful part of this job was carrying water to the concrete-

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mixers—ten stalwart, coal-black Negroes, whose favorite and persistent call was:

Water jack! Water jack!

Y'ought to've been here an' ha'f way back!

I used to hear them sing many folk songs I have since studied more formally. Their version of *John Henry*, like their humor, was of the earthy sort, and there was something elemental about their raucous and easily provoked laughter. From them I learned many off-color verses of *Oh, Didn't He Ramble* and other songs. I heard much about "creepers" and "mon-key-men" and "sweet mamas," strange terms to me then. Strangely enough, though they were the lowest paid men on the job, they were the only ones who ever tipped me. For some reason they liked me but, conscious of my color, they never tired of ribbing me on that score.

For color, it must be admitted, plays some part in the matter of class differences within the Negro group. Though never approximating in its influence the caste distinctions found in the West Indies and, in its worst form, in South Africa, there is still some—in fact, too much—color prejudice among Aframericans. I do not wish, however, to give the wrong impression, because it is easy and customary to exaggerate the facts. Though it is occasionally present among us, color prejudice simply does not play in actual life the sensational role so often ascribed to it by popular writers.

Most of the boys in our neighborhood were light-colored and many of those from up the street with whom we played were dark. In all our amicable relations the problem of color was absent or remained dormant, but as soon as dissension broke out and fists began to fly, color epithets flew also. In such exchanges I was always a "yaller bastard" (the word was never used literally). I, too, I must confess, had

at my command unpleasant retaliatory names—of which I am now thoroughly ashamed. Somehow, though, I was never able to find a suitable retort to the charge invariably hurled at me in such encounters: "Black is honest, yaller steal."

Since I have grown up, I have thought often about the origin of that illogical bit of color philosophy. It is a reflex, I imagine, of the commonly accepted American belief that the mixed person possesses always the worst qualities of both sides of his inheritance. In any case, whatever its origin, as a little "yaller" boy, I early learned I had to fight the color line both within and without the group. But I also learned that the internal fight was trivial and insignificant compared with the real fight—the outside.

Another index to class standing was the way we treated white folks. To us there were only two kinds: "those who were somebody" and "poor white trash." The latter we looked upon with a mixture of pity and contempt; moreover, most of the white people we knew we placed in that category. Our attitude was epigrammatized in the couplet well-known to all southern Negroes:

I had a little dog, his name was Dash;

*I'd ruther be a nigger than poor
white trash.*

(This, of course, was the classic retort when some white person called you "nigger.") But we also prided ourselves on not "looking up to" any white person, rich or poor. We did not say "yessuh" and "no suh"; we never reached for our hats when talking to whites; and we did not "take anything" from them. When white insurance collectors came to our doors, we demanded from them at least a modicum of respect. We never allowed them to call us by our first names or to get familiar with the young girls, things they habitually did in other sections. By and

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large, we were a pretty independent lot, not belligerently so, but ready to stand up for the few rights we possessed.

Although race relations in Hampton were "good," white and colored had their minor clashes. Most of the trouble then as now came about because of some infringement of the Jim-Crow laws on the street cars. Whenever such an incident occurred, typical Virginians that we were, we invariably placed the blame on the conductor and always accused him of having come from North Carolina, which was often true. Virginians, white and black, are inclined to unload a lot of their troubles on the unfortunate migrants from the North State. It has been an easy way to explain some of the Old Dominion's not-so-impressive vital statistics on education and crime.

Of course we fought the white boys whenever occasion demanded. And a lone white boy did not have too good a chance of getting through the colored streets unmolested. But the thing worked both ways. In general there was no real bitterness between the two groups. In mixed neighborhoods the children played naturally together. Though I was reared to believe in that popular Negro myth that one Negro can whip any two whites, I have made many a detour to avoid putting the theory to a test. Whenever I go home now, I generally see one or two white men whom I once chased or who once chased me; and though we never speak, there is a not-unfriendly glint of recognition in our eyes as we pass.

In our group, as in all Negro groups, we often laughed at the little foibles and stupidities of the whites. In the matter of pricking the bubble of the white man's racial vanity, my family had a distinct advantage over most of the neighbors, for we were largely a "fair" group, and several of us could easily "pass" for white. During his youth my father had gone North

and become white. After ten years "across the line," he found it was better to be a poor Negro than a poor white; he came back, married my brownskin mother, and never left home or race again. He, of course, used to tell us many anecdotes about his experiences on the other side. With such a background, there was little danger of our growing up with the feeling of racial inferiority which the pattern of southern living tends to create in the Negro. For this I have always been thankful.

Persons from our neighborhood did not work in service. Since we did not "take in" washing or go to the white folks' kitchens, it was almost an insult to ask any of us to do it. Whenever some misguided or misinformed white woman came to us looking for servants, she was met by a polite but frigid denial of any knowledge concerning such persons, although every one in the block could have directed her to friends or acquaintances and even relatives who did such work. If the white searcher, failing to take the hint, became persistent, she was generally told that there were poor whites living on the next street who probably needed work and would help her. And if the woman in question were obviously poor white herself, our parents, after she left, would let off steam in prolonged and highly indignant comment on her effrontery—"the nerve of her, a poor white devil, asking us if we could work for her!"

Of course we were oversensitive about such things and were on occasion guilty of making mountains of mole-hills, but we were just as appreciative of little courtesies when extended by the other race. A clerk who called a Negro woman "Mrs." or a conductor who helped an old Negro on the car became local legends. Such persons by little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness created a host of friends among us that they never dreamed they

had. When a northern white family moved into our neighborhood, they were simply showered with hospitality almost furtively given. We were pathetically pleased that these white strangers lived among us, or rather had moved in among us, which is quite a different thing, as every Southerner knows.

And there was one lesson, perhaps my earliest on the ways of white folks, which I learned from our next door neighbors, the Tolivers. During slavery time, Mrs. Toliver's parents had been owned by a distinguished local family. Like many southern families, this one had gone to pieces after the Civil War; and, in my boyhood, its last local member had become the town ne'er-do-well, drunkard, and derelict. There is nothing more tragic in the South than a white bum, particularly if he has once been "somebody." B— had hit rock bottom, but he had one friend left in Hampton. Because of the memory of her mother and because of her own intrinsic good-heartedness, Mrs. Toliver never failed him. He could always find a meal at her house, and he came pretty regularly. B—, as I have said, had fallen rather low, but he still retained a spark of southern pride. Low enough to live on Negro charity, he was still a white gentleman; and though he ate at the Tolivers' he could not eat with them. They had to prepare a special and separate table for him.

Somehow, as I look back on the relations between the Tolivers and B—, my sympathies go out to the derelict and my respect to his Negro friends. But I can still hear the vituperative comments of my father as he scathingly denounced the Tolivers for being spineless "white folks niggers." But my father was wrong. I believe that the Tolivers, not through spine-

lessness, but rather through some sort of instinctive courtesy, were allowing their guest to cling to his last remnant of self-respect.

In spite of an attenuated class consciousness which we undoubtedly possessed, in spite of a natural and understandable sensitiveness on the problem of race, we were not a bad lot, and we never gave ourselves any great airs. Lacking the sophistication of the older Negro families in the large cities, we were plain, simple, and relatively uneducated folk, determined to be decent and respectable, determined also to see to it that the children grew up to be well-mannered, law-abiding citizens. Prissy and stodgy we certainly were at times, but we were only typical middle-class Americans with the added handicap of color.

Because it was so easy and so customary for the whites to laugh at Negroes, we as the inheritors of "second-generation respectability" tried both consciously and unconsciously to be like other Americans. In these days of proletarian domination of literature, it is fashionable to laugh at bourgeois strivings, but I am glad my parents and neighbors tried to instil in me the good, old-fashioned middle-class virtues of honesty, industry, and independence when I was in knee pants.

Arthur P. Davis is professor of English at Virginia Union University in Richmond. One of the editors of The Negro Caravan, author of Isaac Watts: His Life and Works, Dr. Davis also finds time apart from his teaching to conduct a lively column in the Norfolk Journal and Guide. "When I Was in Knee Pants" is an excerpt from a forthcoming book by the same title.

DEMOCRACY IS FOR THE UNAFRAID

CHESTER B. HIMES

WHAT frightens me most today is not the recurring race riots, the economic pressures on "minorities," the internment of Americans of darker-skinned ancestry whose loyalty to the ideology of white supremacy is doubted, nor even the whole scope and viciousness of the recent growth of race hatreds and the insidious beginning of propagandism for a white alliance for "self-protection"—not these so much as the white man's sudden consciousness of his own fear of other races of which these are but manifestations. I can see no hope for any "minority" group, nor even for democracy itself, in the existence of this fear.

People who are afraid are cruel, vicious, furtive, dangerous; they are dishonest, malicious, vindictive; they destroy the things of which they are afraid, or are destroyed by them. The host who is afraid, hearing a noise in his kitchen, tiptoes down the back stairs and blows out the brains of an ice-box raiding guest whom he thinks is a burglar; the policeman who is afraid shoots the manacled prisoner who bends to tie his shoe lace; the industrialist who is afraid hires thugs and murderers to fight unionists; the capitalist who is afraid sabotages public welfare; the politician who is afraid attacks leaders of weakly supported causes to hide his own compromises; the statesman who is afraid endeavors to isolate his nation; and the government head who is afraid fails in the execution of laws, both national and international.

A race that is afraid bands in mobs to

lynch, murder, intimidate, and destroy members of other races. Long ago we realized the Nazis did not hate the Jewish people so much as fear them. Members of the Ku Klux Klan, Silvershirts, Bundists, and other similar American organizations whose aims are the destruction and intimidation of certain racial and religious groups are cowards from the word go; they are as representative of cowardly people as the Storm Troopers are of Nazism. Only cowards seek to destroy "minority" groups; courageous people are not afraid of them. In themselves such people are not dangerous. In themselves the cowardly are never dangerous, never more dangerous than Hitler in 1930. But when they become representative of the majority race within a nation, when they infect the entire body with their own cowardice, then a complete breakdown of law and decency follows, and all persons not contained in that race suffer the most cruel oppression.

This is what I fear is happening in America today—the cowardice of a relatively small percentage of white Americans is seeping into the consciousness of the majority and making them all afraid of the darker races. No thinking person, especially no thinking Negro, wants this to happen, for such fear, he knows, will drive them first to destroy the Negro in America.

Perhaps because the white man has always realized how greatly he is outnumbered by the dark peoples of the world, he has always had fear of them tucked away

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in his subconsciousness. Today, shortened horizons are bringing white and colored abruptly face to face, and the fear is breaking out. We find it in the insidious advocacy of a white alliance which would perhaps include Germany after the Hitler regime has been overthrown. We find it in a Jim-Crow Army that sends unarmed Negro soldiers into a hostile South to be booted and lynched by white civilians. We find it in a question which keeps coming back to mind—are we seeking the defeat of our “Aryan” enemies, or the winning of them?

Fear may easily become the greatest tragedy of this historic period. For the eventual peace of the world and the continuation of progress depend upon the white man’s ability to live in equality, integrity, and courage in a civilization where he is outnumbered by peoples of other races. *It is imperative that he be unafraid.* For if, because of his fear, he finds himself unable to live as a neighbor and equal competitor with other races, there will be no peace and little progress.

What concerns me more at the present is that, if the white man is not unafraid, the United States will never attain democracy.

Dictatorship is not so much a government for the weak and the afraid, but of the weak and the afraid. With even one dictatorship remaining in the world after the war, there will soon be another struggle. The fear of dictators is an evil and tremendous thing; they are afraid of everything that does not agree with them and of most things that do. Because of this, driven by it, struggling desperately to overcome it, dictators will always try to enslave the world. They have to; they can not otherwise exist. Many of us have yet to understand this. We have also to understand that in the growing weakness of the white race in America, as demonstrated

by its present fear-driven actions, dictatorship may come to the United States before we know what true democracy is like.

For democracy is for the unafraid. It sprang from the minds of people who were unafraid and was intended for them. Had our forefathers been cowardly, we would have had no Declaration of Independence. (Can you imagine our present Congressmen saying, and meaning: “Give me democracy or give me death!” Or our capitalists posing this question: “Is white supremacy so false and white leadership so precarious as to be upheld by lies, hate, and violence?”) No, we would not even have our semblance of democracy; we would have no Constitution, no history and heritage of pride. The decision our Colonial forefathers had to make in 1776 of rejecting England’s tyranny was a decision harder than today’s of granting all of America’s varying ethnic groups full participation in democracy. The price they had to pay in human blood and sacrifice was a price greater by far than even the most rabid Southerner predicts, should Negroes be granted their democratic rights now.

In the winter of 1777-1778, when the Army of Independence hovered at Valley Forge, hungry, ragged, and dispirited, a single thread of fear would have lost for us our nation. The very structure and existence of democracy depends upon the courage of its people; upon their ability to impart fairness, exact justice, and correct evils. It exists only in the premise that its adherents are not afraid to accept the fundamental fact of mankind’s equality, to guarantee that it shall be preserved in all the circumstances of life.

Any Negro family could live in happiness and accord in a neighborhood of white Southerners—if the white families were unafraid. With confidence in the execution and administration of their laws,

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the whites could not be afraid that Negroes would slit their throats, rape their daughters, or burn their homes. With confidence in their schools, which Negroes would of course attend, they could have no fear of Negroes' lack of sanitation, convention, decency, and quietness—which they would learn along with whites. With confidence in their own sagacity and intelligence, they could have no fear of Negroes ruining their business by competition or fleecing them out of their wealth by cunning. With confidence in their own democratic ideology, the thought could never occur to them that Negroes are not ready for democracy; it would be part of their unchangeable convictions that since the signing of the Declaration of Independence the simple fact of being born within the boundaries of the territory of the United States is all that insures any person—white or colored—his democratic rights and privileges. Nor could the thought occur that the presence of a Negro family in their community would bring them disgrace or shame: they would feel the Negro family not only had a right to live in the community, but was part of it. With confidence in their own children, were they all agreed that Negroes were atypical or socially distasteful, they could have no fear that their sons or daughters would marry into the Negro family. What kind of logic is it, incidentally, that makes people cry over "black mummies" who, they admit, raised them and taught them the fundamentals of virtue, religion, and decency, and then lynch their "black mummies' " sons?

When the white man banishes his fear, he will banish with it all the bugaboos of race; and he himself will for the first time be free. For people who nurture race hatreds and dedicate their lives to the proposition that they are superior are never free; their thoughts, efforts, and

aims are always limited and hindered by the necessity of proving it.

I once heard a rich and famous white man relate how he freed his mind of all thoughts of race and color and looked upon all peoples as equal in an effort to learn, if possible, whether there was any fundamental and distinguishable difference in peoples of different races. He realized that having been brought up in a tradition of white superiority, this would be impossible as long as he could identify people. So he pretended an eye infection and for a month went about with his eyes bandaged.

For the first time in his life as a rich, famous, white American he felt free. He was relieved of the necessity of pretending superiority, of hating people because of their color, of despising people because of their race; he did not every moment have to be aware of his reactions; he did not have to feel affronted, disgraced, humiliated, tolerant, condescending, or philanthropic because of another person's physical attributes or identifiable religious beliefs; his mind was free from all the psychoses of race antagonisms.

War is teaching this lesson of equality to many of our youths in uniform. Coming upon the bodies of two soldiers lying face downward in the muck of a distant battle field, both having died for the preservation of the same ideal, under the same flag, in the same uniform, they are learning the ridiculousness of thinking: "This man, being white, is superior to that man, who is black." They have learned that in a week's time the color which made one "better" than the other will have gone from both.

Here at home white Americans must learn courage, too. They must learn that Negroes and members of other races working and living side by side with them in a community of interests do not detract from their prestige but add to it; that

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equal participation by all peoples in the benefits of democracy is not a thing to bring disgrace but a thing to inspire praise and create pride. They must learn that bravery does not consist in persecuting the few and the weak (for then all our enemies would be the bravest of nations) but of protecting them.

The white race has attained leadership in the world of today. Although people of other races have played a magnificent part, the white race is largely responsible for the creation of our present civilization. So far, much of the white race's talent, its ingenuity, creative genius, and ability to organize, produce, and conquer has been employed to subdue and exploit the other races of the world. While the mechanics of this civilization may continue for many centuries to come, its character is bound to change, for the other races of the world have reached the point where they will no longer be exploited or subdued.

Now this is the question: is the white race courageous enough to accept the inevitable, to accept the fact that exploita-

tion and oppression of other races is no longer physically or materially possible, and to continue its leadership in integrity and equality, competing with other races in fairness while respecting their rights of self-determination, meeting with them and negotiating justice and equity for all, dealing with them in culture and commerce? Or is it afraid of ultimate extermination or subjugation?

No thinking Negro prays for black supremacy; he does not want any kind of supremacy—black, white, or indifferent. He prays the white race will have sufficient strength and courage to be unafraid of democracy. For he knows there are much greater things to fear than racial equality—the historic tragedy of Nazism, for instance, or the unutterable chaos of a race war.

Chester B. Himes is a free-lance writer in California who has contributed to Esquire, Coronet, Opportunity, The Crisis, Los Angeles War Worker, and other publications.

AMERICAN WOMEN . . .

ALIEN SEAMEN: THE CASE OF JOSE DIAZ

A LETTER AND A REPLY

To Earl G. Harrison, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, from Read Lewis, Executive Director of the Common Council for American Unity, June 11, 1943.

THANKS for the stay in the case of Jose Diaz. Save for your 11th hour intervention, he would have been deported without further inquiry, and a serious injustice would, I am convinced, have been done. The case deserves very careful study to see why the ordinary processes of government and of social agency co-operation failed.

Let me review the facts as I have them. Jose Diaz was born on September 15, 1911, at Gijon, Spain. His father was Jose Diaz and his mother Matera Dominguez. By occupation Mr. Diaz is a laborer, having worked as a brickmason in Spain. According to his testimony at the hearings at Ellis Island on May 5, 1942 on his warrant of arrest, he was a member of the Anti-Fascist Youth in the Asturias—which was affiliated with the National Confederation of Workers—for two months before the Franco rebellion broke out in 1936, and later served as Secretary General of this organization for about a year in 1936 and 1937. He also served in the armed forces of the Republic (Loyalist Spain) from July 1936—when the Franco rebellion began—until October, 1937, when the Asturias fell to Franco. At this time he was taken prisoner by Italian forces, delivered to the Franco authorities, and held prisoner in a concentration

camp for eight months. He escaped, hid in Barcelona for some two years while he worked as a brickmason under an assumed name, went from Barcelona to Bilbao and Seville, stowed on a British ship *Todorna*, which landed him in England about the beginning of 1942. He was in England only a few days until he obtained work on the S.S. *Zypenberg*. After working in port for some ten days, he sailed on it as a coalpasser. In spite of being ill during the voyage, he worked at his job.

The *Zypenberg* landed in Baltimore on March 5, 1942. Mr. Diaz was examined by the immigration authorities along with the other seamen on the vessel, was fingerprinted, registered as an alien, but refused a seaman's card. Mr. Diaz understood he was refused the seaman's card and permission to leave ship like the other men because he did not have adequate papers. The hearings on May 5 indicate he was "remanded on board as a malafide seaman under Executive Order No. 8429." Mr. Diaz reports he was at first offered the opportunity of going to the Spanish Consulate but he refused because he did not wish to become involved in any way with officials of the Franco regime. Later this privilege was refused.

After the ship landed at Baltimore, the Captain paid Mr. Diaz \$50 of the wages due him. He put this in his clothes in his bunk, but it was promptly stolen. Later in the day his wallet and his only remaining money, a half pound English note, were also stolen. These two thefts disgusted Mr. Diaz with the boat and his associates.

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A little later the Captain gave him another \$15. Daily, when the other men went ashore, Mr. Diaz asked permission to go too, but was refused. Apparently he was the only man on board not accorded this privilege. Mr. Diaz says that two "watchmen" with badges—it is not clear whether they were employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service or not—were assigned to watch the ship and the coming and going of the men, the latter having to sign on leaving the ship. Apparently sorry for Mr. Diaz, one of the watchmen finally told him they would let him off ship at 9 o'clock that night. This was Saturday, March 14. When the hour came, Mr. Diaz, instead of leaving by the regular passage, jumped over the rail in order that the watchmen might not be implicated. The watchmen, however, stopped him on the dock and told him to go back. Disappointed and angry at having been fooled, he went to his bunk, undressed, and went to bed. Shortly after, one of the watchmen came to his bunk, told him to get up and get dressed, that they would let him leave ship by the regular gangplank, but that he must give them all his money. He gave his \$15 to the two men, but, on the plea that this left him nothing, they gave him back \$2. Also they exacted a promise not to tell, both under threat of injury if he did and on the plea that it would jeopardize their children and families. The watchmen advised Mr. Diaz not to stay in Baltimore or to show himself, until after the Zypenberg sailed on Monday, March 16. (Mr. Diaz had not previously divulged the exact circumstances of his jumping ship, because he felt bound by the promise exacted by the watchmen. My cross-examination, however, elicited this information, and I convinced him it was his duty to put these facts into the record.)

From the dock, Mr. Diaz got a taxi and asked to be taken to a Spanish board-

ing house. This was done. The house proved to be full, but the landlady recommended another Spanish boarding house, to which Mr. Diaz went. Here he was given lodging for the night, and \$10. He took the train the next morning from Baltimore to New York and, at the suggestion of the people of the boarding house, went to the Confederated Spanish Societies in Brooklyn, which he made his headquarters for the next several weeks. On their advice, apparently, he registered under the Selective Service Act and applied for Social Security.

On Saturday evening, March 28, 1942, Miss Dolores Climent and her mother, attending some party or gathering at the Confederated Spanish Societies, met Mr. Diaz and being "sorry" for him, invited him to their house the following Monday evening. Miss Climent is the daughter of Ramon Climent, a Spaniard, who has lived in the United States for the past twenty-four years. She herself was born in Spain but was brought here when she was less than two years old and has lived here continuously ever since. Her father is employed on a war job by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Mr. Diaz and Miss Climent seem to have had from the beginning more than ordinary interest in each other. Mr. Diaz did not go to the Climents on Monday, March 30, however, because in the meantime he had obtained a job on the S.S. *Nimba* of the Alcoa Line and was busy helping to load this vessel. He did meet Miss Climent at a party given by the Confederated Spanish Societies the following Saturday, April 4, at which time he gave her a poem he had written her and which is among her prized possessions today.

Mr. Diaz expected to sail as a member of the crew on the S.S. *Nimba*, but when the boat was ready to leave, the immigration authorities refused to let him sail because he did not have the necessary

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identification papers, the temporary passport given him by the British authorities and the permission to ship on British ships having been stolen from him along with his money on the Zypenberg in Baltimore. The immigration officers took him from the S.S. Nimba aboard their boat to the Barge Office at the foot of Manhattan, searched his bag, asked for his papers, saw his draft and Social Security cards and released him.

Mr. Diaz then got a job at the Plymouth Restaurant in Brooklyn and worked there two or three weeks. He left the job voluntarily, because he felt it was the right thing to do: since he had shipped as a seaman, he felt that serving in that capacity was the way to fulfill his obligations. He tried to get a job on other boats, but was refused for lack of the necessary papers. On or about April 20, 1942, he went, with Miss Climent as interpreter, to the Barge Office and told his story to one of the immigration officers there. (He says he could identify the man to whom he talked.) He told this man he had jumped ship because he had been robbed, that he had tried to reship, but had been refused for lack of the necessary papers, and asked the help of the immigration authorities in trying to get him such papers. They advised writing to the immigration authorities in Baltimore regarding the papers. Such a letter was written by Miss Climent and she and Mr. Diaz went back to the Barge Office several times in the course of the next week or so in order to find out whether a reply had yet been received. When they called at the Barge Office on April 30, Mr. Diaz was roughly and peremptorily seized by the immigration officers and taken to Ellis Island. Miss Climent asked permission to go with him, so that she might interpret, but was refused. Distraught, she sought for help and someone suggested Mr. A., who maintains an immigrant aid bureau,

and told her he might be able to assist her.

The hearings on Mr. Diaz' warrant of arrest took place at Ellis Island on May 5, 1942. Miss Climent was present with him, but otherwise he was unrepresented. Following the hearing, he was released on bond of \$500, furnished by Miss Climent.

The presiding inspector subsequently proposed as a conclusion of law "that although under Sec. 19 (c) 1 of the Immigration Act of 1917 respondent may be granted the privilege of voluntary departure from the United States in lieu of deportation, the case presents no factors which warrant the exercise in favor of respondent of the discretion granted the Attorney General by said Act," and went on to recommend "that the alien be deported to England at the expense of the steamship company which brought him here, or if that is not practicable, at the expense of the government, to Spain."

The proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law were not made, apparently, until September, 1942. At that time Mr. A. was notified and wrote the Law Division at Ellis Island, taking exceptions to the proposed order on the ground that "the individual is not a seaman, is already gainfully employed in the United States, and is now formally engaged to a girl who is a legal resident of this country," pointing out that Mr. Diaz was a refugee from the Franco regime, and asking that he be granted the right to leave the country without a warrant of deportation and be given the privilege of pre-examination.

On October 13, 1942 the Department of Justice issued a warrant for Mr. Diaz' deportation. Mr. A. received word of this only a few days before the day set for the wedding of Mr. Diaz and Miss Climent. He did not tell them until later. They were married on November 8, 1942, with an elaborate religious ceremony and without knowledge that the warrant of deportation had been issued. On November 12

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Mr. A. wrote the Law Division at Ellis Island, asking for a reconsideration of the case and on December 7 filed a formal request for reopening the case on the ground that Mr. Diaz "is married to a legal resident of this country, that he is the sole supporter of his wife who is legally residing in this country, that he is a refugee seeking asylum in this country." Under date of April 10, 1943, the Law Department wrote Mr. A. "that on February 10, 1943, it was ordered that the motion to re-open this case is denied." On May 26 an inspector called at Mr. Diaz' home and asked him to accompany him to the immigration office on Ninth Avenue to answer a few questions. But because Mr. Diaz was ill in bed at the time, this was not possible. It was agreed that he would report at Ellis Island on Saturday morning, May 29. Despite this promise, immigration inspectors called at his home to take him into custody on Friday morning, May 28.

In the meantime, following his release from Ellis Island on bond on May 5, 1942, Mr. Diaz had obtained employment. He worked on roads in Connecticut, as a floor scraper, and on boats for the Union Engineering Company. During this time he also tried to get into the United States Air Force, having flown a number of times in Spain—not, however, as a pilot but as a bombardier. His efforts in this direction were not successful, but he was examined and accepted by the Army and had been told to report for induction on June 1, 1943. It should also be noted that Mr. Diaz and Miss Climent had become formally engaged on July 31, 1942, a date supplied by Miss Climent; that on February 17, 1943, Miss Climent, then Mrs. Diaz, had been naturalized as an American citizen, and that before arrangements had been completed for her husband's deportation, she was an expectant mother.

When Mr. A. learned on or about May

26 that Mr. Diaz was scheduled for actual deportation on May 29, he asked a friend in Philadelphia to visit the Immigration and Naturalization Service to see if anything could be done. This friend saw Mr. B., who, I am told, got out the record of the case but said that it was not possible to do anything. On May 27, Mr. A. also telephoned me and gave me a history of the case. He told me also that in the course of the year he had become well acquainted with Mr. Diaz and the Climent family and could, consequently, testify as to their character from personal as well as professional knowledge. As I have been acquainted with Mr. A. for a number of years and know him to be a wholly honest, loyal, conscientious and careful person, I was convinced that an unsound decision had been reached regarding Mr. Diaz and that undeserved hardship and serious injustice were threatened. I consequently telephoned you on May 28 and asked you to stay deportation until the merits of the case could be further examined. This you did. On June 1, Mr. Diaz reported to the Army, according to his instructions, was duly sworn in, and left for Camp Upton in a few days. That is where the case now stands.

In attempting to analyze the foregoing facts, I am at a disadvantage both in not having seen the government's complete record in the case and in not being familiar, I am afraid, with some of the technicalities of the law and regulations applying to cases of this kind. I cannot understand, however, the justification for the conclusion of law—proposed as a result of the first hearing on May 5, 1942—that the case presented *no* factors which warranted granting the voluntary departure permitted under Sec. 19 (c) 1 of the Immigration Act of 1917. It seems to me that a person of good character, a refugee attached to the principles of democratic

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government, a man who, although not really a seaman, was willing and eager to reship and who made every effort to do so, even to the extent of voluntarily putting his whole case before the immigration authorities and asking their help, was entitled to voluntary departure, even though he jumped ship on entering this country. This seems to me the crux of the case. Mr. Diaz' claim to the privilege of voluntary departure was further strengthened by the circumstances under which he jumped ship, by the fact that he was a soldier on our side in the worldwide struggle for democracy, and also by his general character. Whether Mr. Diaz was, or was not, technically a "seaman," the moral, human, and social factors in his case were precisely the same. Is a seaman beyond the mercy and humanity accorded to other men? The law granting discretion makes no such distinction.

Mr. Diaz, however, was a brickmason, a soldier, a refugee—not a seaman, by any common-sense meaning of the term. That he was nevertheless eager and willing to reship did not make him a seaman, but did throw considerable light on the character and quality of the man. At the hearing on May 5 the fact did not appear that he had voluntarily gone to the immigration authorities, made a full statement of his case and asked their help in enabling him to reship. It seems a serious omission that this fact which had so important a bearing on Mr. Diaz' character and good faith and which was known to the immigration authorities should not have been brought out.

It was unfortunate, also, that Mr. A. in presenting his exceptions to the proposed findings in September, 1942, should have stressed the irrelevant and unconvincing arguments that Mr. Diaz was already gainfully employed in the United States and engaged to a girl who was a legal resident of this country. These were

no reasons for leniency in the case of a man who had just entered our country illegally. But the honor and moral character of this man, the extenuating circumstances connected with his illegal entry, the fact that he had tried to rectify this fault, that he had voluntarily gone to our immigration authorities, told them the whole story and asked them to help him reship, the fact that he had been a fellow-soldier in our common cause, were reasons which warranted only one answer. Mr. A.'s failure to present what seem to me the true grounds for exception may have had the effect of diverting the attention of the Board of Immigration Appeals from the real merits of the case.

There must be hundreds of similar cases in which the alien does not understand the implications of what is taking place, and is not represented, or is poorly represented. Ought not the government do more to make certain, so far as it can, that all the relevant facts are before it, particularly those human and social facts that are so important in judging situations of this kind? In some courts, I believe, it is customary for a probation officer to investigate and talk with an offender before he is sentenced, in order to report on the quality, character, and background of the man and so aid the judge in making a just and appropriate disposition of the case. Ought not something similar to be done in many types of deportation cases? Certainly there appears to be little in the record of the present case to give any adequate idea of the character and quality of the man involved.

From superficial consideration it might readily be assumed that Mr. Diaz, not being really a seaman, had come to the United States with the intention of jumping ship and having done so, had sought to marry an American girl at the first opportunity, in order to qualify as a hardship case. Nothing, however, could be further

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from the truth. Mr. Diaz is, I am convinced, completely honest, conscientious, sensitive, intelligent, honorable, an impassioned believer in democracy. He did not leave Spain—where, in his own words, “my machine gun sang a-plenty against that brutal power which today is already biting the dust of defeat”—in order “to seek refuge and live a comfortable life,” but rather “to take up arms again to conquer the enemies of democracy.” Miss Climent and the Climent family are likewise conscientious and honorable people. The attachment between Mr. Diaz and Miss Climent was obviously a genuine one, and the marriage between them took place not because of, but rather in spite of, his illegal status in this country. Unfortunately there seems to be little, if any, evidence in the record as to these facts, which are all-important in interpreting accurately the specific issues of the case and in determining whether Mr. Diaz was entitled to an exercise of the discretion which the law permits.

Another point deserving attention is the form of the order recommended after the hearing on May 5, namely, that Mr. Diaz “be deported to England at the expense of the steamship company which brought him here, or if that is not practicable, at the expense of the government, to Spain.” Doubtless the recommendation of the presiding inspector, so far as deportation to Spain is concerned, was never approved. But it ought never to have been made. The fact that since the Diaz case came to my attention, I have been told of similar cases—how true the reports are, I do not know—where deportation to Spain actually took place, further raises the question. The United States is engaged in a great war for its own survival and the survival of its way of life. The civil war in Spain was part of that worldwide struggle. To return a co-fighter in that struggle to Spanish authorities who

would imprison or condemn him to death, seems, whatever our immigration law, unthinkable. The United States and some of the other United Nations have already too much on their conscience in their treatment of Spain during those crucial pre-war years. I feel sure you will agree that deporting men like Mr. Diaz to Spain would be similar to deporting to Germany—assuming it could be done—an anti-Nazi German who had fought with the United Nations.

It is a disturbing commentary on the processes of appeal and review that the several requests to re-open the Diaz case—until my appeal to you—should have been unavailing. That may be partly the result of Mr. A.’s failure to press, in connection with new facts, the evidence that might have resulted in a reversal of the original error. The case certainly illustrates the need for making social agencies and others realize more clearly the important part they play in such cases and the exact issues on which decisions must turn. Thus, in this case, if the original decision in favor of deportation had been sound, the principal facts urged by Mr. A. in asking a rehearing, namely, that Mr. Diaz had married a legal resident of this country and was her sole support, were not convincing. Unfortunately Mr. A. was not in a position to present the case personally, either at the original hearing, or on appeal, and thus was unable to impress on those in authority the real character of Mr. Diaz. But does Mr. A.’s failure to press the true grounds for reversal excuse the government’s failure to put into the record originally the facts within its possession, or to get at the real merits of the case, when a re-opening was requested, or later when a last-minute appeal was made to your office in Philadelphia? Does not the government have a double responsibility in all such cases—not only to protect the country, but to do justice to the individual?

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Can it in the long run protect the country, in the highest sense, unless it perfects a procedure and machinery which, so far as humanly possible, will assure justice to the individual? Does not this case indicate that present deportation procedures should be further improved?

The case has another interesting angle. Life does not stand still. Where originally Mr. Diaz was, it seems to me, entitled only to the privilege of voluntary departure, today his deportation would result in serious economic detriment to a citizen wife, and tomorrow to a citizen child. The case, therefore, presents grounds which, I believe, warrant the Department exercising its discretion, under Sec. 19 (c) 2 of the Act of 1917, to suspend deportation, and thus to lay the basis for Mr. Diaz' becoming a legal resident of the United States. Just how his service in the Army will affect this situation, I do not know, but since he was not lawfully admitted to the United States, he cannot be naturalized under the present provisions of the Second War Powers Act. When Mr. Diaz landed in Baltimore in March,

1942, he had no thought of remaining permanently in the United States, but things have worked out so that it seems logical and natural for him to stay here. His wife is too much of an American to be willing to go elsewhere. Mr. Diaz himself would, I believe, be an asset to any country.

Thanks to your intervention and his induction in our Army, Mr. Diaz' personal problem seems likely to be solved. My present interest in the case is to turn its lessons to more general ends. How can the ordinary processes of government and social agency co-operation which came so near to failure in Mr. Diaz' case, be perfected to prevent such failures?

This letter, I realize, raises more questions than it answers. These will take time and study and an expert knowledge of your procedures. Perhaps if your office could tell the story from time to time of cases of this sort, it would be one way to bring home both to government officials and social agencies their mutual responsibilities in seeing that justice is done to deserving aliens and that the country is protected against undeserving aliens.

FROM MR. HARRISON'S REPLY

THANK you for having taken the time and trouble to write me at such length. Such interest and spirit as are shown by your letter are most helpful to government officers who are charged with grave and sometimes unpleasant duties in time of war.

I am very glad to discuss with you the situation regarding persons who arrive in the United States in the status of seaman and who then "jump ship" here. I shall do this not alone from the view-

point of the very interesting case involving Jose Diaz since, as you say, that case for the time being at least has been adjusted, but from the broader viewpoint of the entire problem faced by all the Allied Governments as a result of alien seamen desertions at ports in this country.

Immediately upon the outbreak of the war, desertions by seamen in this country increased from something under 1,800 annually to more than 8,000 although

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the total number of arriving seamen dropped sharply. As late as May 1943 entire crews were still deserting their ships. As many as thirty allied ships at one time were delayed in sailing from New York Harbor solely as a result of inadequate crews following desertions. I need not point out that when ships carrying troops or munitions or food to our allies or to our own expeditionary forces abroad were delayed in sailing and thus forced to await the next convoy, the war efforts of this country and its allies were being seriously impeded.

It became necessary to take drastic action, and it was taken. Such action I might say was planned and determined not alone by the Immigration and Naturalization Service or even the Department of Justice. The policy was gradually evolved by an Inter-Allied Conference sponsored by the War Shipping Administration and consisting of allied consuls, shipping missions, and representatives of this Service. This Conference, to meet the allied seaman shortage, unanimously supported the following measures: (a) the development of better conditions ashore and afloat for seamen, to counteract the several principal causes for desertions, and (b) the arrest of deserting seamen with a view to deportation.

An Inter-Departmental Committee, created by the President on February 14, 1942, joined with the Inter-Allied Conference in calling upon the Attorney General "to arrest deserting seamen with a view to deportation." I might say at this point, however, that all apprehended seamen were given the opportunity to reshipe voluntarily. As you set forth in your letter, Jose Diaz would have had no difficulty in this connection if he had been in possession of papers which departing seamen must have under war regulations. The fact that he did not have them was not his fault; nor was it ours.

In order to understand fully the so-called "Alien Seamen Program," which while not determined by this Service must be enforced by it, it is necessary to have in mind a series of decisions made both by the Attorney General and by the Board of Immigration Appeals, which, as you know, is a separate and independent body so far as this Service is concerned. The Attorney General, on July 11, 1942, in considering the deportation case of a seaman who had entered the United States after the beginning of the war and thereafter remained unlawfully, ordered his deportation and directed that he be held in custody until reshipment or deportation was effected. It is to be noted that the seaman in question was a machinist who was in position to aid materially the war effort ashore, but it was found also that he could be of service afloat as a ship's engineer. The Attorney General, in further decisions, specifically denied stays of deportation incident to legalization of residence under Section 19(c) (2) of the Immigration Act of 1917, as amended, of aliens unlawfully in the United States who had married citizens or legal residents, for the sole reason that they had entered as deserting seamen since September 1, 1939.

The date of September 1, 1939, became important. Call it arbitrary if you will, but those responsible for the program concluded it was a proper date to fix as a dividing line. The Board of Immigration Appeals concluded to order deportation where entry occurred after September 1, 1939, even though there might be some question of the aliens' classification as seamen. In cases where only one trip was made as a seaman or where the alien while employed aboard as a musician did only incidental work around the ship, the Board stated that there was such a dire need for the service of men on ships that

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persons who entered on or after the specified date in the status of seamen were to be considered as such.

In this connection it might be of interest to quote from the opinion of the Board of Immigration Appeals in the very case of Jose Diaz:

"The respondent (Jose Diaz) claims that he is occupationally a brick mason and that he only served as a seaman on the one voyage that brought him to the United States. Exhibit 3 verifies this fact. However, he states that he expects to continue sailing as a seaman since this is his only means of livelihood at the present time. He has attempted to reship foreign but owing to the lack of an identifying document he has been refused a berth on board ships. The respondent's attorney, in his brief, claims that the respondent is not a seaman. However, on the basis of this record, we find that he is a seaman."

While I am mentioning Jose Diaz' case itself, let me discuss it a little further. The original warrant issued for his arrest had a specific provision in it that he should be permitted to reship foreign. At the hearing given him, which was a full one, he testified that his rating on board ship was that of coal passer and, as already pointed out, that he expected to continue sailing on ships since it was "the only means of employment I have at the present time." I should like to mention also that at the hearing he was specifically asked whether he was engaged to be married. To this he replied: "No, but my girl-friend, Dolores Climent, and I have intentions of being married if and when I am legally admitted to the United States."

But, as you say, life does not stand still. While his subsequent marriage is perfectly understandable, it is a fact that it was entered into when both he and his fiancée knew there was the likelihood or possibility that he would be deported. But even more important is the fact, which I

wish to stress, that the Attorney General has specifically decided, in the exigencies facing him in connection with deserting alien seamen generally, that a subsequent marriage would not bring the deserter within any of the leniency provisions of the deportation statutes. This included the right to apply for suspension of deportation on the ground that economic hardship would result to an American citizen wife.

If I wanted to take the time to do so, I could point to other situations in which, as a part of the war program, it has been found necessary to fix what might be considered as somewhat arbitrary lines, with respect to the effectiveness of marriage, birth of children, etc., in avoiding what otherwise would be the inevitable disposition of "a case."

You stress unduly certain language of the presiding inspector when you refer to portions of his report in which statements are made that "the case presents no factors which warrant the exercise in favor of the respondent of the discretion granted the Attorney General by the Immigration Act," and "that the alien be deported to England . . . or if that is not practicable . . . to Spain." The first quoted phrase was entirely correct under decisions made and policy determined by authorities higher than this Service, as I have outlined above. With respect to the second quoted portion, it merely complies with the law. I assure you that Mr. Diaz' particular situation was carefully taken into account in that this office, when reviewing the report of the presiding inspector, recommended deportation to England. The Board of Immigration Appeals, in further considering the whole record, limited its order of deportation to England, either at steamship or government expense. With respect to the order of the Board of Immigration Appeals, I want to point out further that it specifically provided that "if the alien

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returns to the United States from time to time and upon inspection is found to be a bona fide seaman and entitled to shore leave, except for prior deportation, admission under the 9th Proviso of Section 3 of the Act of February 5, 1917 . . . is hereby authorized for such time as the alien may be admitted as a seaman."

Finally it is appropriate to point out that good moral character, sterling qualities, frankness, and straightforwardness of the man involved are distinctly immaterial factors in these cases. They have been held to be just as irrelevant as subsequent marriages and birth of children. If any or all of these factors had been held to be material and necessary to explore, I can assure you that many more ships would have missed their convoys because of inadequate crews.

At the same time I am quite ready to admit that when, in meeting any emergency, it becomes necessary to lay down even a few fixed rules, some hardship is likely to result in individual cases. While, as you know, I am always glad to delve into individual cases to the fullest possible extent, it has been rather futile to do so with respect to persons who arrived in the

United States for the first time since September 1, 1939, in the role of seamen. I cannot and should not act in those cases on a personal basis, because to do so would be to jeopardize the entire program of providing the necessary manpower for ships. If we had reached the happy day when full and complete justice could be done from the standpoint of each individual concerned, I suppose all would agree that many men and women would not be serving the war effort at the particular points they find themselves today.

The men who received or took Mr. Diaz' money at Baltimore were not employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, nor were they government employees. If Mr. Diaz was in any manner roughly treated by officers of this Service, I am sorry. I am taking steps, as you know, to wipe out that kind of experience. Frankly I am delighted that he is in the Army. This may prove to be the ultimate solution of his particular case.

In conclusion I wish to assure you that the right of voluntary departure, which you properly refer to as the crux of this particular case, is being granted to seamen generally wherever it is at all possible.

SO WE BOUGHT A FARM

GEORGE AND
HELEN PAPASHVILY

Two things happened at once that spring. Emilia Jacalevna, she was Elia's wife, said she would spend her summer vacation with us in Wilmington, and George entered a contest.

"Must be easy," he said, "so many peoples getting prizes all the time in America on the newspapers and in the radio."

He won an oil burner, a tank, and 300 gallons of fuel. But we lived in a rented house and now there was no place to put this. So, graciously, George accepted an electric refrigerator instead.

"And now let's we be practical," he said after the refrigerator was installed and humming in the kitchen. "Better we buy a house and next time we have a place all ready for the prize. No use to keep making the same mistakes."

So we bought a farm.

But all this was really secondary to Emilia Jacalevna's promise to give us her vacation, a great and unprecedented distinction. For Emilia Jacalevna was extremely fashionable and had 37 dresses to her wardrobe, 2 fur coats, and never appeared twice in the same hair arrangement. And at this time she owned a glittering beauty shop and had given marcelling demonstrations before a packed ballroom at the Astor. In addition Emilia Jacalevna's position made her considerable of an authority on how to be and act "in real American style."

We moved to the farm a few days before Emilia's vacation began, and after the furniture was all put in the wrong rooms and the broken things swept up

and the telephone installed, George said, "Now, I guess I call Elia and give him the direction for Emilia Jacalevna's coming."

"I can't imagine Emilia," I said, "with her dove's blood nail polish and fretwork stockings out on a farm, but go ahead."

George phoned. "Eliko," he said in Georgian, "we moved from Wilmington yesterday. We moved here. Tell Emilia Jacalevna to come to us just the same. Tell her come on the train to Bethlehem. Same way we explaining before. From Pennsylvania Station—only to Bethlehem—not to Wilmington. You understand?"

"Yes," said Eliko, "certainly." He was speaking so close to the mouthpiece that his voice dripped out into our room. "I understand."

"Pennsylvania Station?"

"Yes."

"Tuesday, like we said?"

"Yes."

"All right. Good-bye."

"Wait," Eliko shouted. "But where you want her to come?"

George got a tight hold on the phone. "Beth-le-hem. In Pennsylvania."

"I no get it. Spell."

"Beh eh," George began but there is no th in Georgian. He made the guttural h'ugh.

"I'm not hearing," Eliko screamed. "Sounds like Beagle. Is such a town, Beagle?"

"No," George said. "Pay attention. Bethlehem. Beh eh h'—oh hell—where the steel is. Steel, man, steel!"

"You want her to come to Pittsburgh,

maybe?" Elia inquired hopefully. "You meeting in Pittsburgh station?"

"Look." George braced his feet. "Eliko. City of Bethlehem. Bethlehem, where Christ was born."

"He was born in old country," Eliko said. "I know that. No place here."

In the great patience of rising rage George began again. "Bethlehem. Like your ochestvo, your father's name. Your ochestvo. Got it? O.K. And tell Emilia Jacalevna to call us from the depot."

"Now I understand," Eliko said. "Why you not saying before? She be there. Good-bye."

"I should have thought of that first." George hung up and wiped his forehead. "His father's name. Now he's got it."

"But his father's name wasn't Bethlehem. He surely can't be Elia Bethlehemovich?"

"No. But just like. Bartholomew. Elia Bartholomovich. Emilia Jacalevna will find it now."

We waited Tuesday and Wednesday and all of Thursday, but no Emilia. Friday afternoon the station agent called.

"There's a lady," he said, "that's been waiting here quite some time, and I think she might belong to you."

We hurried to the station. It was Emilia Jacalevna looking as usual like a stranger in a new dress, a new hat, a new coiffure, and a new makeup.

"So," she said delightedly. "You no meeting me. I wass in Bechtelsville already, a nice quite place, and in Barto, I took postcards there, and I wass in New Jerusalem, too. I wass all over." She smiled happily. "I wass two days in here. Wass funny to see the peoples. They think you never come for me. I wass laughing."

"We're terribly, terribly sorry," I said. "We're awfully sorry—but anyway—why were you laughing?"

"Oh, because I know you will come—sometime," Emilia said.

So we drove home and unloaded the wardrobe case and the leather makeup kit and two hat boxes and the valise and the shoe carrier, but a new and hitherto undisclosed Emilia Jacalevna followed them out of the car.

"Iss Farm," she said ecstatically, arching her neck and inhaling toward the barn. "Iss Farm. Why you not telling? Come on—" She pulled off her dazzling lizard pumps and her stockings and started out barefoot across the yard.

She took in the barn with a careful eye to the beams, examined the pigsty, shook her head over the chicken houses, encircled the oat field pulling several heads for speculative chewing, lumped handfuls of dirt in each field, walked the creek length, and finally, with us still in her wake, came home and sat down under the catalpa to think it out.

"Iss not good for chickens, this farm," she said. "Too damp. Iss not good for potatoes. Too sticky. Iss not good for barley, too, maybe. But iss good farm. A fine farm. Now we make the arrangements what to do. Wheat? Rye?"

I said, "I thought we wouldn't plant anything really. That is—" seeing her face—"hardly anything. Just some—oh—tomatoes and cucumbers and things." I said, "I thought mostly we'd live here like a house but not like a farm. The fields can stand."

"Then would be weeds," Emilia said severely. "Why, on half such a farm as this—on a quarter such a farm—a man would be rich at home for his whole life—and send his children to school—and wear a golden watch with a golden chain."

"Oh, I don't think there's much money in farming, Emilia Jacalevna," I said. "Farming doesn't pay, although it must be lots of fun."

"Pay? Why, on this farm in a stone house with three, four, six, eight—" she ticked them off on her fingers—"nine

SO WE BOUGHT A FARM

rooms and a spring house and pens and such a kind of barn lives the richest farmer in the country. He has pigs and cows, and horses in his fields, and his mows are full of hay, this farmer, and his bins full of grains. To speak with him at the market iss an honor. Have to plant. And first on a farm iss to plow."

"My father sold our own raised horse, Challa," George pointed out, "and with that money he sent me to Vladikavkaz to take a trade. At the droshke station he was not ashamed to weep, my father. He said to me, 'Go, my son, and learn, and you will not have to walk after a plow all your life like me—to earn your bread in bitterness.' My father said that. Besides, I don't like farming."

"If Life gives, you have to take," Emilia said. "Can't help. Iss Fate. In our village wass a man and drawing water he fell into the well. He screams and screams. The neighbors pulled him out with ropes and a hook. He said, 'Thank God.' But he said Thank God too soon, that man. In the war they took him for a sailor. On the Kronstadt a wave washed him over. He drowned. Left a wife, father, mother, three children. The water wanted him. That's all. Can't help. Iss Fate. How about pigs?"

"No pigs," George said flatly. "No pigs at all unless wild boars—a few for eating."

"Cows, then? Barn full of smooth brown cows to give cream. We scrub one room all clean to make the butter in. And sheep—a few sheep for the pasture shows nice. And chickens—" Emilia dreamed—"red chickens. Red ones iss looking richer than plain white."

George, still with the wild boars, said, "I would hang the hams without smoke from the ceiling of the room where a bright fire burns. And the fat would drop—drop—drop—in pearls—drop—drop, and when the ham I could see through it like through a window glass we would

have a party and eat. Like nuts it tastes—ham from wild boars."

"O.K. pigs, then," Emilia agreed. "I have a secret from my mother for pigs. A mash warm at noon with milk. Maybe with pigs we winning a prize from the government. Iss such things here?"

"Maybe there is," I said. "From the Department of Agriculture or the County Fair or something."

"And you know," Emilia said, "to such a rich farm as this—in bad times the poors are coming and the orphans and the crippled ones all with little baskets for help. And you are giving. From such a rich farm you can afford. They bless you, those peoples, and you thank God. He's giving you such a way to help the poors."

"Personally," I said, "if any such thing ever happened to me I'd be so embarrassed I'd be willing to drop dead. Besides they go to the Community Chest."

"What thou keepest," George recited automatically, "is lost. What thou givest is forever thine. Lines from our great poet S'hota Rustaveli. But charity is no good. Have to show people better ways."

"They asking you advices, too," Emilia said. "How to live, how to marry, how to die. And you tell them answers. All those books, those journals you reading—that wouldn't be wasted now."

"Not knowing how to live myself," I said crossly, "I certainly wouldn't tell anybody else how."

In silence we listened to the cicadas.

"Tomorrow I go home," Emilia said suddenly.

"Oh, Emilia Jacalevna!" Now I felt contrite. "Don't go. Stay. Only farms are different here. For America this would be a poor farm—a barren farm—probably the worst farm anywhere around. We bought the poorest because it cost the least."

"Iss good farm," Emilia said resolutely. "And tomorrow morning I go home—"

"Stay," I said, "and we can lie in the

COMMON GROUND

sun all day and swim and do all the things people do in the country—pick flowers and—”

“And tomorrow night I be back,” Emilia went on. “But you meeting me this time. You no fooling me.” She laughed to herself. “I’m still remembering you not meeting me. Wass funny.”

In the morning there was nothing to do but take her to the 8:30 train.

“She’ll never come back,” I said to George. “Probably she’s furious and she’ll write and make such a polite apology that we’d never know it except that we already do. What do you think?”

“Well,” said George, “might she comes back and might she doesn’t. Who’s knowing until they seeing?”

But we met the evening local anyway and Emilia got off, buttressed with corded bundles and a fat shopping bag.

“So,” she began as we bumped up the lane. “In Nev York iss everybody glad you bought a place. Only they say, why you not telling everybody such good kind of news? Comes on Sunday Kosta with Vera, he makes you electric lights. Comes Eliko, I told him ask inquiries by his customers for a bathroom. Something rich, I said,

black or purple or green in real American style. Closes the restaurant and comes Anita and Mischa, too, and they have things for you—such things—” She closed her eyes in a swoon of anticipation. “Until you see.”

We went into the kitchen and George set down her bundles.

“But what you needing now,” she said, “I’m giving.” She reached down her bodice and from her corset unpinned a purse and counted out a hundred dollars in bills on the table. “For buying things for planting.”

She opened the first parcel. It was a forty-pound smoked ham. “For eating when everybody is hongry.”

She slit the second package. “Such a swinging hammock. See. For resting under the trees after the work is through.

“And now can begin the farm.”

This is the third sketch by the Papashvilys in the pages of CG, and the prospects are bright for more. There will eventually be a book of them, to be published by Harpers.

BLACK MOTHER PRAYING IN THE SUMMER 1943

OWEN DODSON

Dedicated to Negro mothers everywhere
and especially to Lillian C. Dodson

My great God, You been a tenderness ta me,
Through the thick and through the thin;
You been a pilla ta my soul;
You been like the shinin light a mornin in the black dark,
A elevator ta my spirit.

Now there's a fire in this land like a last judgment,
And I done sat down by the rivers a Babylon
And wept deep when I remembered Zion,
Secin the water that can't quench fire
And the fire that burn up rivers.
Lord, I'm gonna say my say real quick and simple:

You know bout this war that's bitin the skies and gougin out the earth.
Last month, Lord, I bid my last boy away ta fight.
I got all my boys fightin now for they country.
Didn't think bout it cept it were for freedom;
Didn't think cause they was black they wasn't American;
Didn't think a thing cept that they was my only sons.
And there was mothers all over the world
Sacrificin they sons like You let Yours be nailed
To the wood for men ta behold the right.

Now, I'm a black mother, Lord, I knows that now,
Black and burnin in these burnin times.
I can't hold my peace cause peace ain't fit ta mention
When they's fightin right here in our streets
Like dogs—mongrel dogs and hill cats.
White is fightin black right here where hate abides like a cancer wound
And Freedom is writ big and crossed out:
Where, bless God, they's draggin us outta cars
In Texas and California, in Newark, Detroit,

COMMON GROUND

Blood on the darkness, Lord, blood on the pavement,
Leavin us moanin and afraid.
What has we done?
Where and when has we done?
They's plantin the seeds a hate down in our bone marrow
When we don't want ta hate.

We don't speak much in the street where I live, my God,
Nobody speak much, but we thinkin deep
Of the black sons in lands far as the wind can go,
Black boys fightin this war with them.
We thinkin deep bout they sisters stitchin airplane canvas
And they old fathers plowin for wheat
And they mothers bendin in wash tubs,
They brothers at the factory wheels.
They all is bein body beat and spirit beat and heart sore and wonderin.

Listen, Lord, they ain't nowhere for black mothers ta turn.
Won't You plant Your Son's goodness in this land
Before it too late?
Set Your stars a sweetness twinklin over us like winda lamps
Before it too late?
Help these men ta see they losin while they winnin
Long as they allow theyselves ta lynch in the city streets and on
country roads?

When can I pray again,
View peace in my own parlor again?
When my sons come home,
How can I show em my broken hands?
How can I show em they sister's twisted back?
How can I present they land ta them?
How, when they been battlin in far places for freedom?
Better let em die in the desert drinkin sand
Or holdin onta water and shippin into death
Than they come back an see they sufferin for vain.

I done seen a man runnin for his life,
Runnin like the wind, from a mob, ta no shelter.
Where were a hidin place for him?
Saw a dark girl nine years old
Cryin cause her father done had

COMMON GROUND

The light scratched from his eyes in the month of June.
Where the seein place for him?
A black boy lyin with his arms huggin the pavement in pain.
What he starin at?
Good people, hands up, searched for guns and razors and pipes.
When they gonna pray again?

How, precious God, can I watch my son's eyes
When they hear this terrible?
How can I pray again when my tongue
Is near cleavin to the roof of my mouth?
Tell me, Lord, how?

Every time they strike us they strikin Your Son;
Every time they shove us in, they cornerin they own children.
I'm gonna scream before I hope again.
I ain't never gonna hush my mouth or lay down this heavy, black, weary,
terrible load
Until I fights ta stamp my feet with my black sons
On a freedom solid rock and stand there peaceful
And look out into the star wilderness of the sky
And the land lyin about clean, and secure land,
And people not afraid again.

Lord, let us all see the golden wheat together,
Harvest the harvest together,
Touch the fullness and the hallelujah together.

AMEN

Poet and playwright, Owen Dodson is a graduate of Bates College and Yale University. He has been director of drama at Spelman College, Hampton Institute, and the Atlanta University Summer Theatre.

The scratch board drawing is by Oliver Harrington, who received his degree in fine arts and literature from Yale University in 1938. Nationally known as a painter, he has also drawn political cartoons for the New York People's Voice and has created a widely-syndicated cartoon character "Bootsie." He is now engaged in a series of graphic studies of Army camps for the Pittsburgh Courier.

A JEW TO HIS FELLOW-AMERICANS

MARIE SYRKIN

THERE is something I should like to ask my fellow-Americans. I should like to ask it frankly despite the painfulness of the subject. I ask it as a Jew, as an American, above all as a human being sharing with my fellows the traditions and faiths of civilized mankind. The question which torments me is in the hearts of a great many American Jews. It is no individual outcry, no personal complaint. Let me put it bluntly. Many of us cannot understand the comparative apathy of the Christian world before the most enormous crime of which history holds record. I refer to the mass murder of the Jews of Europe by the Nazis.

Only a little over a year ago the news first broke that a government in the heart of Europe had established "extermination centers" where specially trained "extermination squads" were methodically murdering so many thousands per day—children, women, and men—whose sole guilt was that they belonged to the people which had given the Ten Commandments to the world. Even after a decade of Nazi bestiality, the establishment of human slaughterhouses for the express purpose of killing six million people within a given span of time had the quality of a lunatic nightmare. I remember the sense of the monstrous and unbelievable experienced by every Jew to whom I spoke during those days. We whispered to each other as one whispers of something unspeakable and obscene. I remember my sure expectation that Christians would be shaken even as Jews were shaken. This was each man's

business, for not only the Jews were being assailed; every moral value of the Christian world was being defied and trampled on, on a scale previously unimagined and unknown. The expectation proved naive. My America, which in 1905 had so furiously protested against the Kishineff pogrom, which had been so outraged by the Turkish massacres of the Armenians after the last war, which, more recently, showed how quick were its nerves with compassion in the response to the destruction of Lidice—my America remained shockingly indifferent to the thousandfold Lidice of the Jews of Europe.

I should like to believe this lethargic reaction to evil so vast was due to incredulity, a still lingering skepticism in regard to "atrocities stories," but the history of the last twelve months must have made even the most skeptical realize that the avowed and much publicized Nazi determination to "rid the world of Jews" is no rhetorical flourish. The process which began in persecution and spoliation in 1933 has, in the course of ten years, reached the ultimate stage of systematic massacre. When Goebbels shrieked over the radio: "It is our aim to extirpate the Jews. Win or lose, we must, we shall, attain this goal," he was, for once, describing his purposes truthfully.

Nazi savagery has followed a well-defined pattern: first, Jews were deprived of civil rights; then they were deprived of every opportunity to sustain themselves economically; next, they were segregated in ghettos where they perished of famine,

disease, sporadic killings, and mass murder. Finally came the systematic extermination of all Jews not destroyed before.

Each step in the Nazi master plan appeared incredible when first taken. The introduction of the Nuremberg Laws was assailed as medieval and "unbelievable" in a supposedly civilized country. When ghettos were established through Poland, the world was shocked again. Once more something "unbelievable" had happened to mar the 20th-century landscape. Yet hardly had the heart-rending accounts of the misery in the Warsaw ghetto filtered through, than we began to hear the still more terrible report that the ghettos were being liquidated. There were no more ghettos. To quote a statement issued by the United Nations' Information Office: "The means employed in deporting from the ghetto all those who survive murder and shooting in the street exceed all imagination. In particular, children, old people, and those too weak for work are murdered. Actual data concerning the fate of the deportees are not at hand, but the news is available—irrefutable news—that places of execution have been organized at Chelm and Belzec, where those who survive shootings are murdered *en masse* by means of electrocution and lethal gas. The Germans, have, in fact, transformed Poland into one vast center for murdering Jews, not only those of Polish nationality, but those of other European nationalities also."

While the martyred peoples of Europe—the Greeks, the Poles, the Czechs—have experienced to the full the sadistic "total war" of the Nazi conqueror, "total murder" has been reserved for the Jews. They are not to be enslaved or decimated like the Poles, nor to be destroyed by famine like the Greeks. Wherever they are to be found in the power of the Germans, they are to be totally exterminated. The annals of mankind hold no similar

record of organized murder as a calculated policy of state.

Over three million of the approximately seven million Jews of Europe have already been murdered. I do not refer to those who had the good fortune to die as soldiers fighting the common enemy. I include only the helpless civilian victims. I know how hard it is to visualize agony on so monumental a scale. People who will be stirred by the fate of a kitten on a telegraph pole, or a puppy in a ditch, will glance casually at a headline reporting a million murdered. The very vastness of the calamity paralyzes the imagination. Yet, if one dares to dwell on the meaning of the figures, if one ventures to separate a few of the individual human beings from the gross, anonymous sum, some comprehension comes.

I wish that every Christian could read some copies of the *Gazeta Zydowska*, the newspaper of the Warsaw ghetto before its destruction. In addition to official Nazi ordinances which provided the best evidence as to the kind of existence led by those immured within the ghetto walls, the paper bore tragic witness not only to the desperate struggle of the inhabitants against the physical conditions of their lives, but also to their heroic battle to maintain some semblance of human dignity in that environment. Occasionally some poems by children of the ghetto would appear. I quote two, not for their literary merit, but because in them one sees the extraordinary hope, the breath-taking faith in the goodness of man, which animated those who perished:

MOTELE

*From tomorrow on, I shall be sad,
From tomorrow on!
Today I shall be gay.
What is the use of sadness—tell me that?
Because these evil winds begin to blow?
Why should I grieve for tomorrow today?*

A JEW TO HIS FELLOW-AMERICANS

Tomorrow may be so good, so sunny,
Tomorrow the sun may shine for us again,
We will no longer need to be sad.
From tomorrow on, I shall be sad,
From tomorrow on!
Not today; no! today I will be glad.
And every day, no matter how bitter it be,
I shall say:
From tomorrow on I shall be sad.
Not today!

MARTHA

I must be saving these days
(I have no money to save).
I must save health and strength,
Enough to last me for a long while.
I must save my nerves,
And my thoughts, and my mind,
And the fire of my spirit;
I must be saving of tears that flow—
I shall need them for a long, long while.
I must save endurance these stormy days.
There is so much I need in my life:
Warmth of feeling and a kind heart—
These things I lack; of these I must be
saving!
All these, the gifts of God,
I wish to keep.
How sad I should be,
If I lost them quickly.

The boy's poignant optimism, the girl's determination to keep her soul uncontaminated despite the external degradation of her life, show how valiantly the belief in the essential virtue of man must have been nurtured in the ghetto. Some forces there were maintaining morale in the highest sense. Someone was saying to the children: "This bestial world of Nazi creation is not the real world. There is a world outside these bitter walls where human instead of animal values prevail. Even in this unheated hovel, at this foodless table, preserve your spirit intact. The hour of salvation will come."

The hope and the teaching were vain. Nothing remains of the Warsaw ghetto.

If Motele and Martha were not choked in a Nazi lethal chamber, they perished in the somber, foredoomed battle waged by the last 30,000 Jews of the ghetto. But there are other children like these who could still be saved.

I return to my question. What meaning has Christian charity, the ethical structure of our civilization, if the attempt to save those seeking escape from certain murder is not made?

Our modern world, whose political and economic fibers have become so inextricably intertwined, has also spiritual bonds as close as those of radio, telegraph, or aeroplane. A moral upheaval, an assault on the fundamental ethical concepts of our civilization, will finally make its impact felt in our midst. The Nazis are seeking to create a world of accomplices. They have deliberately and diabolically sought to involve as many Germans as possible in their crimes against the occupied countries so that Germany would feel its fate bound up with that of the Nazi regime. They have openly rejoiced in the failure of the United Nations to take action to save the Jews of Europe because they choose to interpret this failure as spiritual complicity. They were inordinately disturbed by little Denmark's resistance to the deportations of Jews and by Sweden's offer of asylum, because for the first time they were receiving a moral challenge they could not brush aside contemptuously.

Though the governments of the great democracies have contented themselves with protests and denunciations, one should bear in mind that powerful individual voices have repeatedly urged that concrete steps of rescue be taken. The Archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Wales, speaking in behalf of the whole Anglican Episcopate, called on the British government to co-operate with the United Nations and with neutrals "in finding im-

mediate refuge territories within the British Empire and elsewhere for all persons threatened with massacre." Similar pleas have been voiced by various members of Parliament, by the heads of the CIO and the AF of L in the United States, and countless religious and political bodies of various faiths. However, up to date there has been little practical response to the impressive appeals of individuals and organizations.

The failure of the governments of the United Nations to adopt concrete measures of rescue is not due to the fact that nothing can be done. Various detailed rescue programs have been worked out by responsible bodies who have studied the actual possibilities. These programs differ in minor details, or in the emphasis they lay on some particular plan, but they agree on essentials. The rescue program adopted by the recent American Jewish Conference, which included every important Jewish organization in the United States, contains the chief recommendations made by specialists in this field and is representative of all similar proposals. Since it is typical, it may be advisable to analyze it point by point:

The first step advocated is that the United Nations warn the Axis governments and their satellites that those participating in the massacres will be brought to justice. The statement of the Moscow Declaration in regard to atrocities makes no mention of Jews though it specifically enumerates the French, the Dutch, the Poles, the Norwegians, and Cretan peasants. Since in all the occupied countries Jews are separated by the Nazis from the rest of the population and marked for particular slaughter, it is essential that the United Nations make unmistakably clear to the perpetrators that crimes against the Jews will be punished with equal severity.

Though it may be conceded that the

announcement of retribution will have no influence on Hitler and his immediate associates, it may have a deterrent effect on the satellite countries and on Nazi agents in the occupied countries. As the victory of the democracies approaches, Hitler will be impelled by his sadistic mania and pathological hatred of the Jews to expedite the rate of murder so as to kill as many as possible before his defeat; but his henchmen in Rumania, Bulgaria, and Poland may seek to escape punishment if they know that accomplices in civilian murder will be visited with appropriate penalties. The Allied Commission on War Crimes would be in a position to publicize all known transgressions against the civilian populations and to hold the perpetrators to account in the future. Not only Jewish lives, but countless Polish, Yugoslav, Greek, and Russian lives might be saved if the certainty of retribution could be brought home to Hitler's agents by a Commission which announced names, dates, and places.

However, it is obviously not enough to threaten retribution. The crucial problem is to provide asylum for those who can escape. The proposals in regard to asylum include Palestine, the neutral countries, and the great democracies.

The right of every Jewish refugee to enter the Jewish homeland should be publicly acknowledged. Even non-Zionist groups like the American Jewish Committee are agreed that Palestine is the logical refuge for every Jew fleeing from massacre. Palestine has a Jewish population eager to welcome every one who can escape. Anyone who has read of the national jubilee which greeted the arrival of several hundred children who had escaped from Poland, and finally reached Palestine, via Teheran, knows with what joy and thanksgiving the Jewish settlement of Palestine receives each new arrival. The present restrictions imposed by

the British government, because of which ships filled with Jewish refugees have been turned back from the shores of Palestine finally to founder in the sea, are contrary not merely to the pledge of the Balfour Declaration but to the dictates of reason and humanity. Furthermore, Palestine possesses the advantage of being within reach by a short overland route from the Balkan countries. There is no problem of shipping. In regard to Palestine, special emphasis is laid on the rescue of children. Youth Aliyah has saved thousands of children since the rise of Hitler. Thousands more could be rescued if transit facilities to Palestine were expedited.

As far as the neutral nations are concerned, it is urged that countries bordering on Axis-occupied lands should be encouraged to receive all refugees able to escape. These countries would be more likely to facilitate the admission of those seeking to cross their borders if they received assurances that their small territories would not be permanently glutted with refugees, but that eventual asylums would be provided by the great powers. If the neutral countries were to receive assurances of financial help and food supplies for this mission of mercy, they would be encouraged to relax their border regulations and give transit visas.

However, all suggestions to neutral countries are idle unless the great democracies point the way by offering asylum within their own vast territories. The world was heartened and stirred by the recent act of Sweden when its government announced formally that it had asked Germany to permit Danish Jews to come to Sweden. There was naturally no affirmative reply from the Nazis, but every Danish Jew who could escape to Sweden knew that no border guards would thrust him back into the hands of the murderers. Sweden had offered sanctuary. All honor to the little "Nordic" lands of Denmark,

Norway, and Sweden, so close to the Nazi hordes, which have shown more courage and compassion than stronger and richer states!

Sweden's bold demand has put Germany psychologically on the spot. The Axis press has made much of the failure of the United Nations to do anything beside protest. The jibe of the *Völkischer Beobachter* of June 20 is typical: "All the talk about the disappearance of Jewry from Europe is striking proof of the insincerity of enemy propaganda. For years the democratic world has had time to demonstrate in action its alleged love for Jewry by opening its doors to them."

Suggestions have been made that temporary camps for refugees be established in North Africa, Cyprus, Kenya, etc., and that colonization possibilities in the South American countries be explored to the utmost. All possibilities must, of course, be taken into account, but it would be merely begging the question not to discuss the role of our own great country, the United States, in any salvation scheme.

In the first place, it should be pointed out that despite all clamor about letting down immigration bars, immigration during the war years has been far less than that permitted by the quotas. A few figures will be instructive. In 1942, only 28,781 immigrants entered the country. This included about 15,000 from Canada and Latin America. Of the 28,000, less than 12,000 came from Europe. When one considers that an annual immigration of 153,774 is allowed by our laws, one realizes what a small proportion of the legally permitted immigration is actually entering the country. Between the years 1939-42, about a half million more immigrants than actually entered the United States could have been admitted, not by increasing but by re-allocating the quotas. In other words, many now slaughtered in the Nazi extermination centers could have been saved

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if the red tape and numerous difficulties attending the granting of visas had been lightened by the dictates of mercy. Obviously a rule such as the one formerly laid down by the State Department, that a visa could not be granted to anyone with a close relative in Axis-occupied countries, was, in effect if not in purpose, directed precisely at those who most required the means of escape. Similarly, the months which elapse in lengthy investigations before a visa is granted have barred the gates of escape to others. The fate of thousands in Vichy France who could have been saved before the Nazi troops marched in, if their months-old applications for visas had been expedited, is a case in point.

Many thousands could be rescued within the framework of the present quota laws, if the State Department were to be more speedy in the application of its regulations. If further investigation is indicated, this need could be met by detention in work camps in the United States till all checks are completed. In any case, doubtful individuals are few. The obviously innocent, particularly children, are numerous. Neutral shipping is available for transportation. Quotas are available. What apparently is not available in sufficient measure is charity and a sense of moral responsibility.

It is further asked that the democracies proclaim the right of temporary asylum for every refugee who can escape into the territories of the United Nations. This is in line with the resolution introduced by Congressman Dickstein, which urges the temporary admission into the United States of political or religious refugees from the Axis nations. Despite the emphasis on "temporary," such a resolution is not likely to find smooth sailing in our Congress, but it is well to remember that such diverse groups as the National Democratic and Republican Clubs and the

American Federation of Labor have recently declared themselves in favor of temporary asylum outside the quota. The resolution to this effect adopted by the AF of L at its recent convention is particularly significant because the Federation speaks for a large body of workers who ordinarily might fear an over-glutting of the labor market in the postwar world. Though they were reassured by the stress on the word "temporary," nevertheless the unanimous passage of the resolution indicates a heartening breadth of spirit. Organized labor in general resents the libel that it is the workers who bar the lifting of restrictions. The Canadian Trades and Labor Congress, the AF of L, and the heads of the CIO have emphatically declared themselves for temporary asylum in words which leave no doubt as to their sympathies or their willingness to help. However, it should be pointed out again that even within the quotas far more could be done than is being done at present, and that the passage of the Dickstein resolution would probably represent a moral gesture important for its effect on the Nazis, rather than in the admission of appreciably more than the 150,000 now permitted by law.

Finally, it is urged that a special inter-governmental agency be created which would be provided with the resources and authority to utilize all means of facilitating the work of rescue. Such an agency would work together with Jewish organizations and would co-ordinate all activities in this field. In line with this idea, Senator Gillette and Representative Rogers have recently, with the backing of ten colleagues, introduced identical resolutions in Congress calling for "the creation by the President of a Commission of diplomatic, economic, and military experts to formulate and effectuate a plan of immediate action" to save the surviving Jews of Europe. Such a commission would be in a position to

A JEW TO HIS FELLOW-AMERICANS

take whatever steps of rescue were immediately feasible.

The proposals outlined here have been reiterated again and again through the past catastrophic months, and have been urged in one form or another by various groups. So far nothing has been done toward implementing them. The Anglo-American Conference on Refugees recently held in Bermuda has produced nothing tangible up to date. The spokesmen of the Conference contented themselves with the sentiment that salvation would come with victory, and that in the meantime there would be "preliminary consultations." No report on the work of the Conference has as yet been made public, and it is no secret that no rescue plans of any consequence have been undertaken. A British view of the Conference has been summarized by "Sagittarius," writing sardonically in *The Statesman and Nation*:

*"The Conference records its grief,
That it can offer no relief."*

The governments of the United Nations seem to be more timid and apathetic than their constituents. There is enough simple humanitarian sentiment among religious, liberal, and labor circles in the democracies to warrant a bolder awareness of the vast moral issues involved. It is obvious that the Jews of Europe cannot be rescued unless they are provided with places where they can seek sanctuary. The places exist; but the governments involved must rise to the immense human need. This is not the time for Great Britain to close the doors of Palestine. This is not the time for the American State Department to place red-tape obstacles in the way of legitimate applicants for visas.

It is the time to understand the terrible lesson of our era: that we are all involved in each other's fate; that the knife sharpened for another will stab our own throats unless we have the courage and the com-

mon sense to answer the cry for succor. The world which played the part of the innocent passer-by when the first brutal Nazi attack on a helpless minority began is now itself feeling the full impact of the savagery which it considered none of its affair. Who can foretell what brutalization and degradation may take place in our own midst if we continue passively to watch the systematic murder of a whole people? And who can foretell the incalculable consequences of such a brutalization to every civilized community of mankind? Moral isolationism, as well as political, may prove a boomerang.

I have heard it said: "There must be something wrong with the persecuted." Those speaking in ignorance and not in malice should remember that America drew much of her strength, her particular genius, from the persecuted who sought her shores—the Puritans, the French Huguenots, the Calvinist Dutch, the Quakers, the Swedish Lutherans, the English Catholics who founded Maryland. America continued to grow great in that tradition; some of her best sons sprang from those who fled oppression be it of king, kaiser, church, czar, or dictator.

America grew lusty in a generous and ample air. We Americans of today are the inheritors of a tradition which is wise as well as magnanimous. I grew up in it; my fellow-Americans grew up in it. It moves in my blood; it must move in theirs. Why does it not cry out? I cannot understand that my fellows are not shaken as I am shaken by this monstrous crime against men and, being shaken, do not make the voice of America ring strong and true and clear in protest and in action.

Marie Syrkin's is a familiar voice in these pages. She is a New York City school teacher, a free-lance writer, and an associate editor of *The Jewish Frontier*.

FAREWELL TO LITTLE TOKYO

LARRY TAJIRI

THE FIRST question asked of Japanese American evacuees returning to relocation camps from trips to the "outside" is invariably: "How were you treated?" or "What is the public sentiment?" No group in America at the moment is more deeply conscious of public attitudes.

Two full years have now passed since the attack on Pearl Harbor. During this period Japanese Americans have completed a cycle of military-enforced evacuation and detention behind the barbed wire of relocation camps which no other American group has been forced to undergo. Stigmatized by ancestral identification with the enemy in the Pacific, they have suffered since that December Sunday an experience which has had a telling effect on their thinking as a group and as individuals.

The mass indignity of racial evacuation has sharpened a race consciousness born earlier of social discriminations and legal and extra-legal restrictions, and kept alive by the segregated nature of life in the Little Tokyos of the Pacific coast. Now this awareness of ethnic differences has been whetted by the indiscriminate nature of hate engendered by the conditions of war, by the brutalities of the Japanese enemy, and by the incessant dinning of racist propaganda on the West Coast. The passage of angry resolutions against Japanese Americans, and of race legislation such as that aimed at preventing evacuee resettlement in Arkansas and Arizona has also been a contributing factor.

But more than anything else, detention

in the mono-racial world of the relocation camps has intensified the racial hypersensitivity of Japanese Americans. Race was the only yardstick used by military authorities in determining candidates for wholesale evacuation. Except for the few non-Japanese wives and husbands who chose to accept the ignominy of life behind the barbed wire with their exiled mates, all evacuees residing in the camps are of Japanese ancestry. The conditions of detention make them subservient to those in administrative and supervisory capacities, who are Caucasians, and to the military police—also Caucasians—at each camp. While the WRA has made a commendable effort to soften racial stratification between the evacuees and their supervisors with such euphemisms as "residents" and "appointive personnel," words alone cannot cauterize the mental sores left by this segregation. Among the evacuees are those who cannot rationalize their position with their belief in America and in the ideals of democracy. Some have lost faith. Grinding into the race consciousness of others is the fact that while Japanese American citizens were evacuated, white "enemy aliens" were not.

The indiscriminate nature of the evacuation program resulted also in pro-Americans and pro-Japanese being given identical treatment. WRA administrators, in the early stages of the relocation program, wanted to avoid friction and feared that trouble might arise out of any stimulation of existing tensions. Therefore little effort was made in many of the centers to en-

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courage the pro-Americans. In the presence of M.P.'s and other appurtenances hinting of a concentration camp, the propaganda of the anti-Americans naturally flourished. Many who would never have questioned their political and cultural allegiance to America under normal conditions listened and succumbed. They have since made the long one-way journey to Tule Lake, the new segregation camp of the WRA.

The existence of this segregation center, whose residents will be detained for the duration and will presumably be deported when the war is over, is a tragic symbol of what may happen when 18,000 men, women, and children have lost faith in democracy. Many of these expatriates and repatriates—perhaps most of them—were once loyal American citizens and law-abiding aliens. Democracy failed them, as today it fails millions of other Americans who because of race, religious conviction, nationality background, or economic status know only its limited benefits.

But the American dream is strong, and it is strong in the minds and hearts of those who know but marginal treatment and wish for equality. The most remarkable fact that has come out of the evacuation is that so many were able to withstand the negative conditions of the relocation experience and are today leaving those camps with their faith whole and their belief in the basic rightness of their country unscarred.

II

To them, the train of circumstances set into motion by the evacuation now presents an opportunity to achieve, by strange contradiction, what they and other non-white groups have long sought—fuller integration into American life through dispersal resettlement.

But this resettlement of loyal evacuees

in non-military areas outside the camps—now accepted government policy—has been slow in getting under way. Strangely enough, the opening of the gates has not been answered by any pell-mell rush out of internment. Only 25,000 have so far resettled, though according to Dillon S. Myer, national director of the WRA, 70,000 more are eligible to leave the camps. This hesitancy in accepting freedom after a year behind barbed wire can probably be traced not alone to fear of economic insecurity or the dulling of initiative through institutionalization, but to the race consciousness developed by long months in a world where evacuees were the "white men's burden" in the colonialism of the relocation centers.

Resettlement will undoubtedly gain in momentum as stories of successful relocation belie the fears of the evacuees. For the Japanese Americans leaving the camps are not merely returning to American communities to resume their previous insular existence as a racial "minority." For the first time many are establishing themselves in the wider cultural pattern of the country. And as they begin their post-evacuation lives in communities and in areas which do not have a bitter history of prejudice against people of Oriental ancestry, they are, in many cases, experiencing a degree of social acceptance denied them in their former homes. Also, in the absence of a tradition of discrimination against them in inland America, and because of the manpower needs of war industries, Japanese Americans are entering employment fields heretofore closed to them.

This is the great paradox, the amazing contradiction which marks the wartime treatment of Americans of Japanese descent—the fact that the evacuees in losing a part of America are having opened to them the whole of it; that as the full force of the war effort is beginning to be expended against the Pacific enemy, circum-

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stances should be auspicious for the integration of Japanese Americans into the main stream of American life. The WRA today has more than fifty local offices engaged in the single task of promoting their resettlement. Local committees of citizens and interested organizations have been formed in most of the key relocation areas to hasten their integration. Never before has a "minority" group had as distinct an opportunity to trumpet down the walls of racial isolation.

III

The opportunity is here. What will Japanese Americans do with it?

They can, of course, not do anything about it. They can retreat into the shell of self-inscribed exclusiveness. Or they can attempt honestly and creatively to break out of their present understandable racial hypersensitivity and adjust themselves to existing community molds, make real headway toward the goal of assimilation.

As I see it, whether they settle permanently away from their former areas of residence on the West Coast or return eventually to the farms and homes they left behind, they will have to become assimilated or become virtual pariahs. For the Little Tokyos have been shattered and—I hope—will not be put together again.

To bring about assimilation, I believe it is both a necessity and an obligation for the evacuees to align themselves, wherever they go in their post-evacuation world, with the progressive forces within American society and with the mass movement of all marginal groups toward the full realization of the American dream. They will find support and encouragement in the race relations committees which are being set up in every part of the country in recognition of existing tensions; in the social action program of the churches, in progressive trade unions, in civil liberty groups and social welfare bodies. And, as

they achieve a greater degree of assimilation, they will find their social needs are being met in the churches they attend, the trade unions to which they belong, the civic and service organizations they join; they will no longer feel the necessity of forming social and recreational organizations composed wholly of members of their own race.

It will be important, too, that as they establish themselves in new communities, the evacuees recognize the necessity for individual action whenever discrimination is pointed at them. They must learn that whenever they fail to demand for themselves the rights that have been denied them, they help set a pattern for further discrimination. The evacuee who accepts the simple edict "We don't employ 'Japs'" or "This union doesn't take 'Japs'" has failed not only himself but all who suffer discrimination. He fails also every organization that fights for his right to equal treatment. He must understand this.

He will find there are governmental and private agencies to help combat specific cases of discrimination such as these. If he meets discriminatory practices in employment, whether from employers or from unions, he has the same protection given workers of all creeds and races in the President's Executive Order 8802 on Fair Employment Practices. In connection with labor, he must remember that discrimination against those of Oriental ancestry is generally found only in the old-line AF of L unions and in the Railway Brotherhoods whose racial attitudes were crystallized during a time when "coolie" competition was an issue. These hand-me-down policies, drawn in protest against cheap immigrant labor from the Orient, still bar many Americans of Oriental ancestry from working in certain war industries. Yet, in Utah recently, Federal machinery implementing the President's

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Executive Order was utilized successfully by evacuee workers who filed a complaint against an AF of L union with the War Manpower Commission and the FEPC. The evacuees were admitted into the union.

There has been no case of discrimination by the CIO against Japanese Americans. In fact, the CIO has actively assisted the resettlement program. The 200 members of the National Maritime Union, for example, who were languishing in the evacuee camps are again on the high seas. The CIO's attitude has done much to break down the resistance many Japanese Americans had formed to trade unions earlier because of the policy of segregation maintained on Oriental membership by the Teamsters and other unions active in fields in which Japanese Americans found employment prior to evacuation. It is notable that the CIO and the trade union movement in general is providing much of the impetus toward a realistic approach to the job of easing race tensions.

In cases where discrimination involves Constitutional guarantees, the resettled evacuee can appeal to the various civil rights groups, particularly the American Civil Liberties Union, which has already entered cases involving the rights of Americans under the evacuation and curfew orders.

IV

Much of this problem of assimilation is obviously individual. But it is also wider and deeper. I cannot see how Japanese Americans can resolve their situation wholly on an individual plane. For, while their present predicament has some economic and political overtones, basically, as evacuation proved, it is a racial problem, rooted in the racial attitudes of the dominant white majority, particularly on the West Coast. The problem of Japanese Americans being predominantly one of

color and race, its ultimate solution will depend on correlation with other problems of color and race in America today.

This fact is slowly seeping into the consciousness of the group. Before evacuation, there was little in the way of a common color consciousness felt by Japanese Americans in their relationships with other colored groups. Rather, there was an obvious effort to consider their problem as springing not alone from differences in color, but from economic and political sources. Some even felt and hoped they could win acceptance in the larger white world by the sheer brilliance of their artistic or financial accomplishments; that the grubbiness of life in an Oriental ghetto was reserved for those who would not or could not succeed. It is also true that regional prejudices against Filipinos, Mexicans, Negroes, and Jews were accepted by many Japanese Americans, just as these other victims of discrimination sometimes echo the propaganda of the professional "yellow peril" mongers.

But the racial nature of evacuation developed a recognition among many Japanese Americans that they were inescapably relegated to a place on the color wheel of America, that their problem was basically one of color and is part of the unfinished racial business of democracy. With this realization came a corresponding awareness of the urgent and demanding color problem of the American Negro.

Wartime factors resulted in the location of 16,000 evacuees in Arkansas and 5,000 Japanese American soldiers in Mississippi. Two of the WRA camps, Jerome and Rohwer, were built in southeastern Arkansas, in a race-conscious corner of a race-conscious state. Evacuees entered the South with misgivings, although the majority were unaware of the extent of discrimination against the Negro. With the first Jim-Crow car and the segregated waiting-room at the first station south of the Mason-

Dixon line, they learned. When instances of race violence, though minor in nature, were reported against the evacuees, "Jap Crow" became an inevitable corollary of "Jim Crow." The efforts of some citizens of nearby towns to "Jap Crow" the evacuees were stoutly resisted, and Thomas Sancton observed in *The New Republic* that this struggle to resist race discrimination was watched closely by Negro groups.

Japanese American soldiers were brought into contact with southern race frictions when the War Department activated the Japanese American combat team at Camp Shelby near Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The first group to arrive at Shelby consisted of 2,600 volunteers fresh from the color harmony of Hawaii. They hit southern racial attitudes head on, and when they had recovered from the shock, they began writing letters of protest, first to the people at home and later to the President himself. These letters pointed out the inconsistencies of southern treatment of Negroes in the light of our announced war and peace aims. A special representative, Hung Wai Ching, a Chinese American, was sent from Hawaii to investigate. He visited Camp Shelby and then pounded on desks from the Pentagon to the White House, demanding the removal of the Japanese American unit to a camp above the Mason-Dixon line.

The South's traditional bi-racialism, in southern Arkansas and Mississippi at least, has been somewhat shaken by this introduction of large groups of Japanese Americans. In the South they are apparently neither white nor colored. Evacuees entering Jim-Crow cars on the presumption that they, too, are colored, have been ordered out by irate conductors. Yet Japanese American school children in Hattiesburg were segregated in a special class in the white school. And while no cases of discrimination have been reported against Japanese American soldiers on furlough

visits to other southern cities, a segregated uso for Nisei troops has now been opened in Hattiesburg. This new uso, though it also admits other soldiers, stands beside the white uso and the Negro uso in the town, a telling reminder of racial attitudes.

Further implementing the coupling of the Japanese American situation with the Negro problem was the claim made by Representative Leroy Johnson of California that a coalition of west-coast and deep-southern congressmen was planning to force legislation for the deportation of persons of Japanese extraction. This suggestion, which would carry log-rolling to a new extreme, was bulwarked by the fact that such poll-taxers as Senators Stewart and Reynolds and Representatives Rankin, Dies, Allen, and Starnes already have urged legislative restrictions on the Nisei.

Indicative, too, of the identification of their position with the problems of other racial groups, outside resettlement of evacuees hit a temporary snag last summer when the news was red with the blood of race riots. Many a Nisei put himself in the place of Mexican and Negro Americans in the Los Angeles "zoot suit" riot and wondered what would have happened had he been in Los Angeles that June evening.

Thus, fact by fact and incident by incident, Japanese Americans are coming to the realization that theirs is only a part of the nation's race problems. The recent excellent suggestions by Carey McWilliams and by John Collier and Saul K. Padover in *COMMON GROUND* for the formulation of a forthright Federal policy on "minorities" and race problems through the passage of a Fair Racial Practices Act and the establishment of an Institute of Ethnic Democracy offer a springboard for co-ordinated action by America's "minorities." Both these proposals need a groundswell of support from the discriminated-against groups themselves if they are to be brought to the attention of the whole

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American people. And the basic problem is not that of one group, or of another; it is an American problem. Only the whole American people can solve it. We will all have to learn to reach out beyond our own racial or national or religious insularity to make of America for each other what we want it to be for ourselves.

As a Japanese American, I know our group has far to go along the road to the actual co-ordination of our desire for integration with the mass hopes of all "minorities." But I believe we are coming to the realization that unless America's whole basic racial attitudes are made consistent with Constitutional guarantees, our acceptance as a group will be only superficial. I know that Nisei Americans are not

alone—even in the dimly lighted barracks of relocation camps in the lonely spaces of western deserts. Other Americans, black, yellow, brown, and tan live with them their dreams of ethnic democracy, and other Americans fight with them in their battles for racial justice. I find strength in the knowledge.

Larry Tajiri is the vigorous editor of the *Pacific Citizen*, national organ of the Japanese American Citizens League, a newspaper devoted to the problems of Americans of Japanese descent and an invaluable aid to other Americans in keeping current with their situation. \$2.50 a year; 413 Beason Building, 25 East Second South Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

SEA BLOOD

MARY POOLE

I am an exile here
in static prairies
far from the island in the Gulf where I was born.
Here inland,
when rain fringes down the glass
and the wind rises,
the south wind, the sea wind,
I remember it sharp with brine, silver with spindrift,
a multitude of whispering voices.

My grandfather laughs faintly.
"Eh, lad, it's England water in our veins."

He, once lost in old ports far across the world,
loving the lonely wonders of the Lord
came back to be landbound, restless, haunted,

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because the wind in his ears was the moan of a woman
and the seaweed gleamed like her hair on a satin pillow.

Sometimes in storm and thunder
he will talk
of groundswells rumbling basso against miles of iron shore,
great stripes of foam
writhing like lucent eels in moonlight,
screaming gulls sucked down in undertows of air,
a sea of blue tumbling giants,
white lances of sunlight warded by bronze water.

And the gray eyes of my grandfather
look inward on his kaleidoscope of sea . . .

the sea hushed where the tide runs in over rocks,
a smurr of seafog blotting up all sound,
rain and darkness and susurrus of gray space,
the sound of the sea on the side of the ship
like a sweeping broom.

He smells the salt,
he feels the wind,
the cold and the deep.

And I, lost in these long brown plains, listen thirstily.

Mary Poole is a young Texas writer who has taught at the University of Houston
and is now doing magazine work.

SOPHIA BECOMES AN AMERICAN

FOTINE ZIRPIADES

WHEN her third child was born, Sophia Andreopoulos decided to become an American citizen. Then for a long time she did nothing about carrying out this ambition, as the decision had temporarily exhausted her modest supply of initiative, and she contented herself with watching her children grow into Americans.

The oldest girl, Helen, was five when Sophia and Papa Andreopoulos decided the child would have to learn English. Papa took her to a local kindergarten and deposited her with a determinedly smiling young woman. That afternoon he returned to find the child crumpled on a staircase, her dark uneven bangs tossed unbecomingly about her face. His touch awakened her to realization and to tears.

"Oh, Papa," she sobbed in Greek, "I don't like it here. I don't understand what they're saying and the food is so funny. They have fat in the soup and they try to make you eat it. But I couldn't!"

She opened a tightly clenched fist and showed her father a lump of fat wrapped in the greasy remains of a paper napkin. "Papa, please don't make me come here again."

But three months later Helen was criticizing Sophia's and Papa's English.

The baby, however, learned both Greek and English simultaneously and Sophia would set her on the kitchen table and smile at her admiringly. "Speak English, my little Engleza. Come, *Anglitha mou*, my English lady." As the children grew older, Sophia helped them with their read-

ing. Helen would stamp her foot in exasperation. "Mama, help me. I can't read this."

"It isn't hard.

'Rrain, rrain, gaw away,

Cawm again sawm awther day.

Lilla children wan' to play.'"

But after the children passed 1B, there was nothing that Sophia could teach them. And at the age of seven, Helen wondered aloud, "But Mama, why can't you speak English? You've been in America fourteen years, seven more than I have."

Then Mrs. Berger, their neighbor, came in. "Leesen, Sophie, you're always so nice about everything, like toinink off the ges for me every Saturday, I gotta do something for you, ain't it? So we're goink to school together from now on."

With bright new red pencils, five cent notebooks, and hope in their hearts, the two friends launched their scholastic careers. They started in the middle of the semester and Sophia never managed to catch up. She could not find time to do any homework. After washing the breakfast dishes and cleaning house, she went shopping on Second Avenue, and though it was not really necessary, she often walked miles up and down the outdoor market, nosing out bargains, buying tomatoes one cent a pound cheaper, finding larger, better heads of lettuce. Then she rushed to prepare the children's lunch and Papa's food for them to take to him on the way back to school. And there were the long lines of wash on Mondays and

the ironing and the darning, and the preparation of Greek delicacies for the holidays. In the evenings there was always something to be crocheted or a new article of clothing to be made.

"Mrs. Berger—" Sophia broached the subject timidly one day—"I theenk I ken't go bahck to school thees week. I too beesy. Maybe nex' week?"

Disappointed in her protegee, Mrs. Berger, who was fast turning into the star pupil of grade 1A Evening, nodded her head reluctantly. Feeling that a weight had been lifted from her heart, Sophia returned to the dress she was embroidering. "Perhaps next year," she thought guiltily. "Yes, next year. Then I will apply for my papers."

A few more years went by. The children did well at school and Sophia was happy. "I always wanted my children to have what I could not have. And God has been good to me. He has given me clever children," she often said to friends. There were times when women with less precocious offspring were annoyed by Sophia's display of medals and certificates of honor.

The children learned, but could not teach. "How can I go to school?" Sophia complained. "If the teacher asks me, 'Why don't your children teach you?' what shall I say to her?" But every time the girls tried, the lesson ended in an argument. "Oh, Mama, why don't you concentrate?"

"Leave me alone then. I am wasting my time and I have a headache."

For a short time there was even a private teacher whom Papa picked up somewhere. Sophia could barely understand the woman's rich brogue. After a while the lessons turned into weekly visits, with tea and very sweet Greek dainties to facilitate conversation.

Finally Sophia's soul rebelled against paying just for a teacher's company, when she could get any number of friends who

were comprehensible to come and visit for nothing. She invented an imaginary illness and that was the last of Miss O'Byrne.

But when the Alien Registration Act was passed, Sophia suddenly found herself outside the huge and friendly circle that encompasses Americans. She had to go to the public school where her children had been honor students and be fingerprinted as an alien. Like innumerable others she felt, "But this is my country. I'm something else, but I'm an American too."

The following week, plump, dark, and little, combining an air of determination with her shyness, Sophia registered in the first grade at evening school. She was sent to a class where an incredibly assorted group had squeezed into tiny seats. The teacher, Mrs. Julia Sasiadek, took her registration card and escorted her to a seat beside a bright-eyed, smiling brunette who turned out to be Maria Barcia.

When Sophia got home that evening, Papa asked what she had learned. "Well, the teacher is Russian American and her husband is Czech. They have a little boy, four years old, and a nurse for him. And she comes to the city all the way from New Jersey, just to teach us! I have a new friend, Mrs. Barcia, who is coming to visit me next week. Her husband has been in a neurological institution for years and she is all alone, poor woman."

Several lessons later there was exciting news. Three new students had arrived—the wife, son, and daughter of the former mayor of one of the larger cities of Greece. Then there was the young Greek who offered to drive Sophia and some of her friends home one night. "Imagine a boy asking women our age to go car riding!"

Between the fun of getting to know her classmates and the parties the class gave at every opportunity, Sophia began to get

an inkling of English grammar. She would display her test papers proudly. There was an increasing number of 100's in spelling. "Well," she sometimes admitted cautiously to the family, "I did open my notebook during the test, but so did almost everyone else."

At Christmas time she spent hours baking her contribution to the class party. All the students brought something to eat—things ordinary to the bearers but rare and exotic to the others. Sophia helped collect contributions for the teacher's gift and she was also on the committee that bought sodas for the party.

Before the fun began, the class sang *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Then an enthusiastic eighty-year-old requested *My Country, 'Tis* and offered to play it for the class. Beaming, he shuffled to the

girls, then turned to her friends and giggled self-consciously.

At home Sophia began gradually to add little English phrases to her speech. "Vehry well. Will you, please? Pair-hahps." She never quite managed to say "How do you do" without stuttering. Helen suggested "Howdy" as a substitute, but Sophia objected. "Naw, thaht's wrong. You try to fool me."

When the school year closed, Sophia was promoted to 2A and received a certificate of faithful attendance. But in the fall she returned to Mrs. Sasiadek. "I don't want to go to the awther clahss. I loin bera here." The 2A teacher was not nearly so easy-going as the young, smiling blonde of 1A.

But something happened almost at once to disturb the status quo. Mrs.



piano and with his right thumb picked out the melody, while the class stumbled over the words.

A month later there was a graduation party to which the entire school was invited. There was punch, and dainty sandwiches, "American things—pretty—but they leave an empty feeling in the stomach, if you are polite." One of the graduating students asked Sophia to waltz. She refused and referred him to a group of

Sasiadek announced that she was leaving. "Maybe thees time you gonna hahve lillee gel, Mrs. Sasiadek?"

"I hope so, Mrs. Andreopoulos," blushed the teacher.

Mrs. Sasiadek was succeeded by Mrs. Caputo, a pretty brunette who wore sharpie shoes and bright-colored sweaters and skirts. During her first lesson she decided to call the students by their first names and, being of a democratic nature

probably, asked them to call her Rose.

Sophia had trained her children to address their parents and elders in the polite plural. She herself had been raised in a world where children were never heard and rarely seen except when there was work to be done and where proper respect meant just that.

"Imagine, John," she told her husband, "she's only about twenty-one and she calls me Sophie! And she treats us all like children. Some of the women even call her Rosie, as if they were all girl friends. But I shall continue to call her Mrs. Caputo."

Months earlier, Sophia had sent away her application for citizenship. Occasionally the girls quizzed her. Sophia would sit in her rocking chair, drinking her evening coffee.

"All right, Mom, who discovered America?"

"Thaht's easy. Christoforos Colombos." She pronounced the *ch* like the Greek letter *chi*.

"O.K. And who was the sixteenth President?"

"Abrahahm Leenk."

"Lincoln, Mama, Lincoln."

"Leencone. He made free the slaves."

"Who is the chief executive of the United States?"

"I don' know what you min."

"Mama, chief means *archegos*, executive, the one who carries out the laws. The President!"

"Oh, Franklinos Rusevelt." This with an air of discovery.

"How many Congressmen in the House of Representatives?"

"Foury-hondreh-feefty-three."

"That's *right*. Good work, Soph." Sophia did not mind when the girls called her that, so long as she knew they were joking.

Months passed and there was no word

from the Bureau of Naturalization. Then one morning Helen ran wildly up the stairs. "Mama, I think it's here!"

She placed a government-franked envelope in her mother's excited hands, which were still damp from the morning dishes. A mimeographed, unimpressive sheet and two enclosures slipped to the floor. Helen grabbed them, read silently. "This is it!" she said. Sophia almost had a heart attack.

The days stumbled along after that. Sophia, who maintained that a cool head and warm feet were signs of good health, felt her hands and feet congealing and her head in a constant fever. Once or twice the girls tried to quiz her, but she could not even remember the name of the first President. "Leave me alone," she pleaded. "If I fail, I fail. Anyway, what do I need papers for? I'm an old woman now. Perhaps the judge will laugh at me."

"My goodness, of course you'll pass. There are people twice your age getting their papers all the time!" said the girls, partly to rid themselves of a growing feeling of unease. Suppose after all these years their mother failed! "We should have done more to help her."

The entire family was up at dawn on the big day. The girls prepared breakfast. The coffee looked rusty, and the pancakes were black at the edges and doughy inside. Everyone except Sophia tried to joke, but the laughter was as weak as the coffee.

As the girls left for work and school, they kissed her and left last minute injunctions. "Don't forget that the men who are examining you are just clerks of a sort. Don't be afraid, and look happy."

"I'm not afraid. What is this certificate, after all? I've gotten along without it."

"Never mind the sour grapes, Sophie." Sophia, Papa, and her other witness,

SOPHIA BECOMES AN AMERICAN

the Greek Italian American grocer from across the street, set out in a taxi, urging the driver to hurry. They arrived too early and had to wait, to the consternation of the two businessmen, who were worrying about their stores.

Finally her turn came.

"Mrs. Andreopoulos!" The voice was Irish and the name was mangled.

Sophia jumped to her feet, her hand flying to her heart. She looked pleadingly at Papa.

"Oh, John, I can't do it."

"Come on, lady. You're next. Alone," he said emphatically.

"Courage, Sophia," said Papa stoutly. The grocer smiled reassuringly but absent-mindedly, for his thoughts were with his salami and cheeses.

Sophia could not see clearly behind the mist which had formed on her glasses. There was a thin, blond youth with a bow tie who asked her name and other pertinent information.

Sophia breathed deeply. Perhaps it would not be so bad. She understood him and he was putting down her answers slowly, precisely. She listened carefully for his next question, which came as he was still writing.

"Have you ever been estranged from your husband?"

She tried to speak, but could not. The young man looked up impatiently, sighed, and repeated the question.

"Excuse me, but I don' ondastahn' what you say. Please say it more plain."

"How do you expect to become a citizen, if you don't know the language?"

"I ondastahn' if you speak plain."

"Were you and your husband ever separated?"

"No, no, no!"

"Are your daughters married?"

"No, nawt yet."

The first part of the ordeal over, she was sent to another room, where she

found her witnesses. This examiner was a more impressive man. After some routine questions he asked, "Why do we celebrate the Fourth of July?"

"Because the July four, seventee-seventy-seex the Americans say they want to be freedawn from the England because the taxes were high."



"What is the highest judicial body in the land?"

Silence.

"What is the highest court in the country?"

"The Supremey Cour'."

"Who makes the laws for the United States?"

"The Cohngress."

"Who are the Senators from New York State?"

"The Jimmy Wagner and the Roberto Mead."

"All right. Now read from this book."

Sophia grasped the book firmly to calm her trembling hands and read: "We the people of the Unared Stets, in ordair to form ā more prefec' oonion" . . .

"That's enough."

A clerk called the witnesses. Sophia stepped back.

"How long have you known the applicant, Mr. Eliades?"

"Eight years, sir."

COMMON GROUND

"Do you believe that she fulfills the requirements for citizenship?"

"Yes. She has a good family, the neighbors all like her, she has gone to school to prepare herself, and she loves this country."

The examiner turned to John Andreopoulos. "Do you think your wife would make a good citizen?"

"I am certain that she would make a fine citizen, sir."

"How is it you're so sure, Mr. Andreopoulos?"

"She has been a good wife and a good mother and a good friend. So she has to be a good citizen."

The rest of the morning was a blur. There were more questions, papers to be signed. The grocer finally left. Somehow Sophia found herself in a taxi with Papa beaming at her.

"Sophia, we have to celebrate. We'll go out to lunch."

She looked at him as if he were demented. She had never heard of such a thing.

"After all, there are no more foreigners in our family!"

But Sophia knew only gloom. "Why are you so sure I passed?"

"Of course you passed. I was proud of the way you answered."

"But you weren't in the other room

when I couldn't understand that boy."

Sophia's pessimism won out. They had lunch at home. But that night, stimulated by the excitement of the girls, Papa brought home a cake, a quart of ice-cream, and a box of candy to celebrate. And they were justified when sometime later Sophia received word to appear to be sworn in as a citizen. The family had another celebration.

Shortly after this final ordeal, Sophia received her final certificate. Holding it in hands which were steady now with a new-found confidence, she read it aloud, studied the picture of her harried-looking former self with a superior smile, and at last placed the paper tenderly in a conspicuous place on the buffet.

She went about her housework absent-mindedly, returning again and again to the buffet. When Papa came home that night, he was beaming.

"Good evening, Sophia. The girls told me the news," he said in Greek.

Sophia looked up seriously from an American evening paper she was trying to read. "I don' ondastahn' you. Spik English, please."

Another sketch by Fotine Zirpiades appeared in the Autumn 1943 issue—"Portrait of Papa."

Bernadine Custer is the illustrator.

MEMO TO JUNIOR HOSTESSES

MARGARET HALSEY

RE: Dancing with Negro servicemen at Service Canteens.

Quite a few of you have asked me questions recently having to do with Negroes at our Canteen, so I think I had better explain the matter in its entirety.

The Canteen's policy about Negroes is based on a quotation which runs as follows: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal. . . ." I'm sure all of you know where that comes from.

The Canteen's policy about Negroes is also based on the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, in which it is specifically stated that nobody is to be denied the rights, privileges, and immunities of American citizenship on account of race, creed, or color.

One hears a good deal of talk, in some circles, about the Reds and long-haired radicals who want to tear down the Constitution. The Reds and long-haired radicals only want to tear it down. The people who deny Negroes democratic equality actually are tearing it down.

I know that some of you on our shift are very deeply prejudiced against accepting Negroes as your social equals. You can't be blamed for having that prejudice in the first place. It was taught to you when you were too young and helpless to be critical. But you certainly can be blamed for hanging onto the prejudice when (a) you are now old enough to know better; (b) you are being given,

in the Canteen, a golden opportunity to come into contact with Negroes under the best possible circumstances and find out what they are really like.

Let's examine the feeling some of you have against, for instance, dancing with Negro servicemen and see what it really amounts to.

There is no scientific basis for the notion that Negroes are inferior to white people. A scientist given a collection of human brains pickled in alcohol cannot tell which ones belonged to Negroes and which to white people. You can check this statement in any good reference library. Intelligence depends on the number and fineness of the convolutions in the brain. It has absolutely nothing to do with the amount of pigment in your skin. If it had, you would all be much stupider when you are sunburned.

Actually I don't believe any of you are very deeply concerned with Negro intelligence. What worries you more is the fear of rape. You unconsciously, but very arrogantly, assume that no male Negro can so much as glance at you without wanting to get you with child. The truth is, that while you are an extremely attractive group of young women, there isn't one single one of you who's that good.

Negro males react to you no more and no less than white males. As women, you know in your hearts that men of any description respond to you pretty much as you intend them to respond. This is especially true in the Canteen, which has

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hardly any points of resemblance at all to a lonely, moonlit shrubbery.

The real basis of prejudice against Negroes is economic and historical, not sexual or psychological. The people who talk about "keeping the niggers in their place" never admit this, because it doesn't show them in an entirely favorable light. Such people prefer to fall back on more melodramatic arguments, usually (1) the honor of their women and (2) the danger of a Negro revolt. Neither of these two arguments stands up very well under close inspection. . . .

The real reason back of the refusal of some of you to mingle with Negroes at the Canteen isn't nearly as romantic and dramatic as you like to think it is. The real reason has nothing to do with rape, seduction, and risings in the night. The real reason can be summed up in two extremely unromantic little words: Cheap labor.

As long as you treat Negroes as sub-humans, you don't have to pay them so much. When you refuse to dance with Negro servicemen at the Canteen you are neither protecting your honor nor making sure that white Southerners won't have their homes burned down around their ears. All you are doing is making it possible for employers all over the country to get Negroes to work for them for less money than those employers would have to pay you.

Do you find that romantic?

You don't live in a romantic age. You live in a machine age, and it's getting more machinery every day. In the old days, large groups of people could live out their entire lives without ever finding out what other large groups of people were doing. That is no longer possible. Unless you can de-invent the aeroplane and cause it to fall into general disuse, you are going to spend an increasing amount of your time mingling with Ne-

groes, Russians, Chinese, Patagonians, and all sorts of hitherto unfamiliar people. . . . You might as well get used to it here and now, on Sunday nights at the Canteen. It will save you a lot of trouble later on.

In our world we have radios, telephones, bathtubs, air-cooling, vitamin pills and sulfa drugs, but we no longer have any group privacy. We can no longer wrap ourselves up in the comforting notion that we are better than other sorts of people. Our own inventions drop these other sorts of people right into our laps, and we either have to get along with them or watch our inventions—along with a lot of other things we hold dear—go crashing into the dust in a series of obliterating wars.

There's only one possible basis for getting along with other sorts of people, and that basis is equality. Real, genuine, three-ply, copper-bottomed equality. If we have any secret yearning to think of ourselves as a Master Race, we have only to pick up a newspaper to see that nobody is giving odds on Master Races these days.

One word of warning before I close. Don't be surprised if you find some of the Negro servicemen sullen and unresponsive and some of them aggressive and too responsive. The war has put the Negroes in a hell of a spot. We need them in the war effort, so we've been forced to give them more equality than we were ever willing to concede before. They aren't used to it, and neither are we. There are bound to be awkwardnesses and mistakes on both sides. If there are, remember that they are inevitable and take them in your stride.

Try to be a little imaginative and put yourself in the Negro's place. When you go into the Canteen, nothing worse can happen to you than getting tired or being bored. When a Negro goes into the Canteen, he has no reason to suppose

MEMO TO JUNIOR HOSTESSES

he won't be snubbed by one of the girls on our shift or openly insulted by a southern soldier whose "superiority" has not been noticeably enhanced by rye with beer chasers. Naturally the Negroes are nervous and very possibly may not behave with Chesterfieldian calm. You wouldn't either, under the same circumstances.

The main thing to remember is this: The Negroes aren't under any obligation to behave better than we do. They didn't come to this country because they wanted to. We brought them here in chains. They didn't write the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. We wrote those documents, and if we now wave them in the Negroes' face and say, "Ha-ha! Practical joke!" we must expect to meet the customary fate of practical jokers.

We kept the Negroes in official slavery until 1864 and we've kept them in unofficial slavery ever since. If you meet a

Negro serviceman at the Canteen whose conduct doesn't come up to your delicate and exacting standards of behavior, just don't forget this one thing—whatever he is, you made him that way.

As a matter of fact, you meet plenty of white servicemen whose conduct fails to enthrall. Few outsiders realize, but all of us know, that being a Junior Hostess and entertaining unselected strangers for three-and-a-half hours is difficult at best. You only make it more difficult when you artificially set aside a portion of these strangers as targets for unreasonable, unscientific, and undemocratic emotion. If you'd just relax and keep your pores open, there wouldn't be any "Negro problem."

Margaret Halsey, author of *With Malice Toward None*, is active in New York City Service Canteens. Her Memo is here reprinted with her permission.

AND HAVE NOT LOVE

HELEN BUGBEE

TWO THOUSAND years ago a Jew was born, and we read that the angels sang. It may be. It may be that the angels sing whenever a child is born. Or it may be that they shake their heads sorrowfully or, with Olympian detachment, smile a little wryly. They have seen so much. But two thousand years ago we read they sang of peace and goodwill. It may be. The world has come a little way. It may be that the moment they saw and sang of was hundreds of thousands of years away.

I sit at my desk while the woman opposite me is unkind to a fellow em-

ployee, a Jewish refugee from Vienna. The word refugee in her mouth has no sound of pride that this land our fathers founded has been a haven always for the oppressed, no hint that the word has anything to do with refuge. Nor is it a simple, uncolored word, stating a fact. In her mouth it is a hideous word, an epithet.

And I go into a restaurant that during the present emergency has employed Negro waitresses, and another woman, a stranger, says, "Of course it isn't nice to be prejudiced, but I like white girls waiting on me, don't you?"

COMMON GROUND

And I get a seat finally in a crowded street car, to hear a seat mate say, "It's getting so nowadays the jigs get the seats and the white people stand up. They shove right through and take all the seats they can find."

I do not shout at these people, though I want to. They couldn't hear me. I remonstrate with the first one, mildly. I have known her a long time. To the second I remark, also mildly, that most of the white help now available is stupid beyond belief; that to me it is a real relief to be waited on by a fairly smart colored girl. On the third I smile slightly—it's such a relief to get a seat—and say, "I guess we all grab the seats when we can find them."

And I remember the words of another Jew, who became Paul as a Christian: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. . . ." And I want to cry out to these people: Where is your love? Is it only for hiding in bedrooms, in the dark? Is it only for magazine fiction, of living happily ever after? Is it only for Frank

Sinatra to croon about and moon about and sing of wedding bells in June about? Is that all your love?

But I say only, "We need all the help we can get" or "You generalize too freely, it seems to me; there are inferior members of all groups. . . ." I say only these things, and feel ashamed, as though, like Peter, I had denied the thing I value most. But I tell myself people learn slowly; that one must start where they are. And I tell myself there are people better equipped than I for dispatching Hitler, and that it would do little good anyway: the disease is in all men; it will be eradicated slowly. And I tell myself that in this war we are fighting only for time, time for all these people to learn, slowly.

And I know these things are true, if anything is true, if there is any hope at all. But I cannot, with Olympian detachment, look at all the time there has been and will be, and sing of peace and goodwill.

I want to scream.

Helen Bugbee is a free-lance writer of old-stock English descent.

• Miscellany •

THE PITFALLS OF SEMANTICS have concerned CG from the start. Many of the words in its field are so loaded with prejudice and misconception we have tried to avoid using them. "Tolerance" is one. We dislike the idea of "tolerating" Americans, of "enduring" them. We think "acceptance" is a better term. We dislike the loose use of the word "race" in connection with national or religious groups. As for the "melting pot," Louis Adamic has aptly said it means turning

somebody into something else, with heat. We think use of "minority," a word now so heavily loaded the wrong way from European experience, tends to create what we want to avoid. Readers will remember that Messrs. Collier and Padover called their proposal an Institute of Ethnic Democracy, using the term "ethnic" because it was "more colorless, less weighted with emotion, than 'racial,' 'minority,' or 'colonial.'"

Yet with all our reservations we use

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the terms ourselves occasionally in our pages. The substitutes are few; the language is poor even in circumlocutions. Organizations we report on may use them in their names—like George S. Schuyler's Association for Tolerance in America; or speeches we quote from, or print in full, may have been built around them.

One of the most valuable recent studies of this "tyranny of labels" was made by S. I. Hayakawa in an article "Race and Words" in the July 1943 issue of *Common Sense* (25 cents, 10 East 49th Street, New York City 17). It will repay careful reading.

THE LONG BRANCH, NEW JERSEY, high school has now for some time been using *COMMON GROUND* in its English work. Curious to know what procedures were followed and what reactions were obtained, we questioned Dora M. Davis, head of the English department. Its use is confined to 11th and 12th grade classes in world literature, English or American literature.

"Our pupils pay for their own magazines; they often combine with as many as six on one copy," writes Miss Davis. "Our chief aim is to get the magazine into the home where it is needed in this community far more than in the school. We do not require either the subscription or the reading, but we strongly recommend both. We give them old copies to look over and take home. I keep my own at school after I have read it.

"The reading is done as part of home reading, aside from regular home work assignments. We set aside several days for discussion of each issue, harking back frequently, of course, as occasion arises.

"We look at the pictures first and appreciate their artistic and social values. Our method of dealing with the stories and other articles has differed. At times we have several groups in a class, each

responsible for certain articles of their own choice; one person from the group acts as discussion leader. Sometimes we have panel discussions, the rest of the class asking questions or making comments. In one class last year, where there were only a few subscriptions, those who read the magazine gave reports on the articles, followed by a question and discussion period.

"We have pupils of many nationalities, all the religions, Negro and white.

"*COMMON GROUND* is the most popular magazine we have used with our pupils, not excepting the *Reader's Digest*, which we do not use at all any more.

"Casual remarks of pupils have shown me that they have taken to heart the truths they read in *COMMON GROUND*. One, interested in journalism, was much impressed with the facts of the Negro press; another, home from college on a week end this fall, wondered why all schools did not discuss racial problems. A Drama Club member in a play for Goodwill Day last spring used the incident of the Jew trying to buy a farm in a Christian neighborhood as one of the three episodes of his play. The whole student body was much impressed. The part of the Jew, incidentally, was taken by a Jewish boy, a nationally known concert pianist, a member of the club.

"I feel, more than with anything else I teach, that the seed is sown deep, and will flower in due time."

NEWS OF AN INTERESTING GOODWILL exchange comes to us from California. When the Japanese American youngsters of the elementary school of Palos Verdes Estates were evacuated, they gave the school a gift of twenty-five dollars. This is now being used to buy books to help build in the remaining youngsters understanding and respect for other people, so that there may be "no more evacuations."

In addition, the Palos Verdes unit of the Committee for Democratic Principles and Fair Play (see Autumn 1943 issue of CG) hopes to match the donation to send a duplicate set of the books to their young Nisei, most of whom are now at the Poston relocation center.

FROM ANNIE NATHAN MEYER, 1225 Park Avenue, New York City, comes a correction:

"Captain Davidson, in his address given to a group of soldiers somewhere in the Pacific ['Passover and Americans in the Pacific,' Henry A. Davidson, Autumn, 1943], quotes from my cousin's sonnet those inspiring lines so much quoted today and so utterly disregarded by Congress and Senate: 'Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door.' Then he goes on to say: 'The poet, incidentally, was a Russian Jewish immigrant who wrote the verse out of a heart overflowing with gratitude for American hospitality to the oppressed of the world.'

"Emma Lazarus, the author of the noble sonnet that is inscribed in bronze on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World was not a Russian nor an immigrant. There was not a drop of Russian blood in her veins, and a woman whose great-grandfather had come to America not as a refugee but in comfortable circumstances and had served as an officer in the American forces of the Revolution can scarcely be called an 'immigrant.' . . . A sister of the poet's mother was the mother of my cousin Benjamin Nathan Cardozo.

"I am sorry to see this foolish story in print for the second time. My cousin was never personally injured by the terrible persecutions of the Jews by Czarist Russia; she did not need to have a heart 'overflowing with gratitude'; she felt indignation at the pogroms as all generous people

did; her soul rebelled against the horrors and the suffering so cruelly and needlessly inflicted on a helpless people. When a young girl I heard her talk indignantly against the persecution of the Jews. Her indignation led her to study the history and the faith of the Jewish people. She took up the study of Hebrew, and for the first time in her life became devoutly religious. She did not live many years after her passionate interest in the Cause. But I am sure it gave her as much true happiness as the realization of the tragedies going on about her gave her despair and unhappiness."

COMMON GROUND should have caught the error. It apologizes.

"ALTHOUGH OUR FUTURE EXISTENCE depends upon the goodwill of the white masses, we have done almost nothing to increase their goodwill, to expand their knowledge and understanding, to deepen their tolerance," wrote George S. Schuyler in the Pittsburgh Courier for July 3. "One looks in vain for any intelligent pro-Negro propaganda which can or is intended to reach the white mass mind, and yet we are astonished that pogroms take place. We have been asleep, and that's all there is to it."

But Mr. Schuyler himself has not been asleep. Well underway is his Association for Tolerance in America, a group of colored and white citizens, dedicated to a program of white mass education. Writing in the Interracial Review (20 Vesey Street, New York City) for July 1943, Mr. Schuyler says: "Its purpose is to present the facts about colored people in simple word and picture in order to counteract vicious propaganda by circulating truth. It seeks to foster real national unity through national understanding. In essence it is a public relations bureau designed to 'sell' the Negro to his white neighbor and thus lessen prejudice and

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tension among the masses, and ultimately eliminate both. It wastes no time in conferences and debate over the obvious but concentrates on such mass education projects as it can afford.

"The first simple experimental project was initiated in June. An 11-inch by 28-

a few well-chosen words, it can be hammered home to millions within a short time. Such a mass educational program will unquestionably alter white public opinion in the direction of greater tolerances and brotherhood. As such an educational campaign spreads, we should see

500,000 of these lads are fighting for You!



Let Them and Theirs Share in Our Democracy

ASSOCIATION FOR TOLERANCE IN AMERICA

inch bus card in black and red showing a helmeted colored soldier's head, with the legend, '500,000 of these lads are fighting for you. Let them and their share in our democracy,' was executed by Elton C. Fax, young colored Brooklyn, New York, artist. On June 15, this card was placed in the 120 street cars and buses of Gary, Indiana, an industrial city with 100,000 whites and 20,000 Negroes. The cards appeared for two weeks. The results were interesting and instructive. There were only two or three cases of mutilation of the cards. Many passengers were openly approving and several were enthusiastic. There were a few complaints from Ku Klux elements, but all in all the experiment proved that this sort of mass education of white people can be done locally and nationally through existing media without difficulty.

"This insignificant beginning was financed by some 200 associates. It can, with increased funds, be expanded to include displays in newspapers and magazines, shorts over the radio, movies and inexpensive pamphlets widely distributed. By stressing a single idea, making the appeal attractive with illustrations and

less and less opposition to passage of more civil rights acts and put an end to mixed schools, residential segregation and economic jim-crowism.

"In warfare every military campaign is preceded by a propaganda campaign to undermine resistance. Actions cannot be changed unless minds are changed. The best fighter in the world is handicapped if the opponent is convinced that he is right. It is the purpose of propaganda to either convince or introduce doubt. Such a program as that of the Association for Tolerance in America can supplement and aid other efforts for the improvement of race relations, and for this reason it should have the support of all groups working toward this end. It is certainly a Christian program, and there seems to be no more fundamental and scientific alternative so far proposed."

We hope Mr. Schuyler's program will strike a responsive note with many CG readers. The cost of maintaining one car card for a month—similar to the one illustrated on this page—is \$3. For active support or for information write to George S. Schuyler, 270 Convent Avenue, New York City 31.

A TIMELY AND USEFUL PAMPHLET has recently been published by the American Civil Liberties Union, "How to Prevent a Race Riot in Your Home Town." Recommended steps in community action are outlined by the author, Winifred Raushenbush, secretary of the Union's Committee Against Race Discrimination. 10 cents a copy: American Civil Liberties Union, 170 Fifth Avenue, New York City 10.

"I KNOW I'M RIGHT WHEN I ARGUE that racial superiority is only a myth, but I don't have the data at hand to prove it to some one else," CG readers complain to us. Their answer is in a recent Public Affairs Pamphlet, "The Races of Mankind," edited for the general reader by two Columbia University anthropologists, Professor Ruth Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish. It answers such questions as these: Do the peoples of the earth have a common origin? Why do some people have light skins and others dark? What does the size of the brain or the shape of the head have to do with intelligence or character? Is everybody's blood the same, or isn't it? What are the tests for racial superiority or inferiority? Does the term "Aryan," as Hitler uses it, have any meaning? Is there a "pure" German? What's the difference between a "race" and a "nation"? Why are some people warlike and others peaceable? Why does race prejudice exist? Is there a cure for it?

10 cents a copy: Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City 20.

READERS WHO MISSED THE SPECIAL supplement of The New Republic for October 18—"The Negro: His Future in America"—will do well to order it now as a sound appraisal to have on hand for reference. It deals factually with Race Science, the Negro in Industry, Negroes

in the Armed Forces, the Negro in Politics, and Negro Progress, and urges immediate action for the development of coordinated programs for ameliorating race prejudices and making democracy a real and living thing. 10 cents a copy: The New Republic, 40 East 49th Street, New York City 17. Rates for larger quantities on request.

"MAKERS OF THE U.S.A.," the map here reproduced, is available in color, 22½" by 34½", at 25 cents a copy from the Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City 10, as visual aid material in its study project "The Church and America's People" reported on in our last issue.

A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES continues at the American Common, 40 East 40th Street, New York City 16. COMMON GROUND, launched three years ago without a christening, made up for the deficiency with a birthday party with a cake sporting three candles, at which Mary Antin was an honored guest and photographs from Alexander Alland's new book, *American Counterpoint*, were exhibited. Lillian Smith spoke at another meeting on the part the individual can play in bettering race relations. John Collier led an exploratory discussion of the Institute of Ethnic Democracy. Friday evenings have been devoted to a series of "Your Fellow-Americans" programs. (Frank G. Nelson's "When Two Cultures Meet," printed earlier in these pages, was given as a talk at the Norwegian American evening.) Most ambitious undertaking was an Emergency Conference on Food and the Foreign-Born, attended by representatives of 75 national organizations, at which 50 nationalities exchanged recipes in forwarding the government's Food Fights for Freedom program. Announcement of activities will be sent on request.

• FILIPINOS • MEXICANS • SLAVS • DANES • SPANIARDS • NEGROES • JAPANESE • SYRIANS • SWISS

A detailed black and white illustration of a map of the United States, where each state is populated with various ethnic groups and cultural symbols. The map is densely packed with labels and drawings representing different nationalities and their associated activities or landmarks. For example, the West Coast features labels like 'JAPANESE', 'FILIPINOS', 'SPANISH', and 'MEXICAN'. The central and northern regions include 'SCANDINAVIANS', 'FINNS', 'SWEDS', and 'GERMANS'. The South and Southeast are marked with 'NEGROES', 'SEMINOLES', and 'SPANISH EXPLORERS'. The map also includes various cultural icons such as a cowboy, a Native American, a factory, a ship, and a lighthouse.

Laure E. Nox Person

• FINNS • SCOTCH-IRISH • SCANDINAVIANS • CHINESE • INDIANS • ENGLISH • SCOTS • ARMENIANS • PORTUGUESE • ITALIANS • GREEKS • 17

• The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

ALL NATIONALITIES ARE HERE

AMERICAN COUNTERPOINT. By Alexander Alland. Introduction by Pearl Buck. New York: John Day. 158 pp. \$3

This is a family album, says Mr. Alland. So it is—the great American family with its members gathered from many lands. And yet, strangely enough, there are many among us who do not recognize our brothers and sisters as such, nor care to welcome them into the circle. They should see this gallery of portraits. One look at the faces in these individual photographic studies and the group pictures, revealing demeanors, costumes, activities, and hints of social relations, should be enough. These are Americans. They are free people. They are the world's gift to our country, our dream and our hope of the future. The breadth and depth of the democratic idea is likewise expressed in Pearl Buck's Introduction, in terms of faith and feeling, with clear-cut logic and compelling force: "It is the denial of freedom to some that threatens our country. When we refuse human equality to Negroes, America is threatened. When Jews suffer because they are Jews, America is threatened. When an American-born Chinese is refused a job because of his blood ancestry, America is threatened. Whenever a man or a woman looks down upon another man or woman because of his race or religion, his color or his class, America is threatened."

In the life of *Harriet Tubman* by Earl Conrad (Associated Publishers. \$3) we have more than the story of one colored woman, who, single-handed, convoyed scores of slaves from the pre-Civil-War

South to the North and liberty, and who resumed the fight for their true liberation after they were legally free. This narrative bears on every feature of that struggle, for Harriet Tubman had known every extreme phase of it in her own extraordinary life. Of her Colonel Higginson wrote: "We have had here the greatest heroine of her age. Her tales of adventure are beyond anything in fiction and her ingenuity and generalship are extraordinary." The real struggle, she knew, began only after Lee had surrendered. It involved a long, slow process of education—for the whites. "If the Northern adults began with their children at the age of three or four, and taught them ordinary Christianity, ordinary morals and decency, the Negro man and woman would truly be free"—by 1880 or 1890, Harriet Tubman hoped.

How much headway has that kind of teaching made in 1943? Here and there a family. Here and there a school. You would find it in the fourth-grade room where Marian Dogherty taught her North End Boston children, as she tells it in *'Scusa Me Teacher* (Marshall Jones. \$1.75), less by precept than by spirit and example. The names Lucia, Carmela, Seraphina, Solomon, Leah, and Maggie (Monohan) give the only clue to the children's origins, for their teacher knows them only as human persons, enters vitally and devotedly into their lives, not only in class but also in their homes, and keeps track of them by letter after they leave. Try a chapter or two of *'Scusa Me Teacher*, with its annals of the naive young, getting their first taste of new

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world manners and of school discipline.

Italian or American? is the title of a social research volume by Irvin L. Child (Yale University Press. \$2.75) in which an answer is sought among second-generation Italian Americans of New Haven. Response to questioning brings out three types of reaction: one claiming to be unreservedly American, another clinging to Italian ways and traditions, a third seeming indifferent or content to let the problem solve itself. Actual responses here recorded reveal definite behavior patterns and attitudes.

A very good and readable account of Swedes in America, and broader than the title would suggest, is Nels Hokanson's *Swedish Immigrants in Lincoln's Time* (Harper. \$3). Twenty years of searching in early newspapers, pamphlets, letters, and the like yielded much of value. The author's informal handling of his sources make this an intimate, attractive volume.

In James A. Porter's *Modern Negro Art* (Dryden Press. \$3.25) we find more than a description of achievement, more than comment on the eighty-five half-tone plates illustrating carving and sculpture as well as painting. We find an able discussion of the nature and conditioning of the art impulse, tending to establish Negro art as truly American, not to be segregated as something determined by racial inheritance.

For a popular and valuable account of the history of Negroes in America, turn to Edwin R. Embree's *Brown Americans* (Viking. \$2.75), "the story of a tenth of a nation." President of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, pioneer student of race problems, with an abolitionist grandfather in his own background, Mr. Embree is well equipped for his task. The account dips back into the first coming of the "brown Americans" to Jamestown in 1619, months before the *Mayflower*; follows them through their adjustments in the new environment, tells the story of their schools and colleges, analyzes their economic opportunities, and brings squarely to the forefront their present paradoxical position in American democracy.

In *Three Times I Bow* (Whittlesey House. \$2.50) Carl Glick takes us back to New York's Chinatown and into the heart and core of Chinese social philosophy through the medium of the very literate yet human and amusing young modern, Kung. This engaging person sells us the sages, but never too seriously. Drafted into military service, he absorbs the discipline whole-heartedly, but reverts as zestfully to his ancestral modes while on leave. He and his college-bred Chinese American wife make a model pair for the interpretation of this facet of American family life.

AMERICANS IN FICTION

The Darker Brother by Bucklin Moon (Doubleday Doran. \$2.50) is from any angle an outstanding novel. It deals with a Negro family from the Deep South transplanted abruptly to Harlem, their brief reprieve followed by long frustration. It deals equally with a white population

that plants or fosters seeds of hate in the younger generation of colored folk, warps their best traits and draws out their worst. Slightings and discrimination follow the darker brother wherever he goes, North or South. Faith and hope are corroded in him. Bucklin Moon writes with precision,

with such power of suggestion that we become eyewitnesses, shocked and shamed at the criminal stupidity race prejudice engenders and the cowardly reasons for it that are given. Modern and frank, yet sensitive and intensely understanding of a colored boy's or girl's most intimate moods, the book is as absorbing a story as you will find, devoid of maudlin sentiment, and with a path of hope.

"In the Nolan neighborhood if you could prove you were born in America it was equivalent to a Mayflower standing"—such was the "melting pot" character of Williamsburgh, Brooklyn, in the early 1900s, as Betty Smith sees it in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (Harper. \$2.75). In this tough, lusty environment Francie Nolan lived her childhood, rich in incident, full of special excitements. Of many national strains—German, Italian, Irish, Polish, Jewish—and of various shades of humanity, were her family and neighbors: the good and bad, the pitiful and ridiculous, the hopeful, the defeated. Many had come to America as Grandma Rommely had—because "in the old country a man

is given to his past, here he belongs to the future." And for that future they and their American children struggled valiantly and persistently with lives of great warmth and tenderness. This is a beautiful story, written with sincerity and deep compassion, and with appreciation of the detail so important to the child, so quickly forgotten by the adult.

Conrad Richter's *The Free Man* (Knopf. \$1.75) is notable for its account of the manner in which indentured labor was brought from Europe in pre-Revolutionary days, and for the vigor of the story in which that account is framed. Seekers after liberty found themselves virtually bondslaves. The rebellion of one such, and his later development as a leader in the struggle for independence makes the substance of this brief but virile fiction.

They Came From France by Clara Ingram Judson (Houghton Mifflin. \$2) dates about the same period, and is a pleasant story for younger readers, with the setting in New Orleans, a good follow-up to her previous *They Came From Sweden*.

RECENT EVENTS IN PERSPECTIVE

Listening to the radio, reading the papers, looking at newsreels, Americans try to grasp the range of ever-widening world-experience they are sharing, and make sense of it. Columnists and commentators help, but the effect is transient. Three such clarifiers of news have chosen to print selected recordings of their comment in book form, giving us the advantage of one continuous picture in which events that stunned us with first impact take on intelligible connection. Of these three, Samuel Grafton's *American Diary*

(Doubleday Doran. \$2.50) brings the stiffest challenge, for it traces the world-shaking events since Munich back to contributing causes for which we were in part responsible and shows us headed before the event to a crisis for which we were mentally and morally unready.

Carl Sandburg is best at voicing what honest and ardent Americans have been feeling. His *Home Front Memo* (Harcourt, Brace. \$3)—platform addresses and broadcasts—reflects what the national conscience has been feeling as one blow

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after another has shattered our peace; also what our hope, courage, and practical realism can accomplish in ridding us of the handicap with which we entered this world struggle, materially and morally unprepared.

Raymond Gram Swing calls his public diary a *Preview of History* (Doubleday Doran. \$2). His is not a chronology of the war but a series of comments selected from his broadcasts. Their forward-looking

character is apparent in such a discussion as that of the Burns Report in which the American character of this social-security plan is compared with the British Beveridge Plan and its practical effects forecast. All through the text there appears a tendency to read in factual news outlines a hint of those developments out of which history is shaped. Such forecasting, "America's foremost news analyst" is well equipped to do.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN NEW WORLD HISTORY

Donald Culross Peattie's *Journey Into America* (Houghton Mifflin. \$3) acquaints a European friend with the real America (hardly to be known from tourist contacts) by taking him behind the scenes in our history where he may meet warmly human and colorful figures: Tom Paine, ragged and half frozen, on Christmas duty before Trenton; Mary Washington in her garden across from Fredericksburg, and later at the Peace Ball, receiving honors her son had won for her; framers of the Constitution, men with aristocratic leanings, struggling in vain against the logic that drives for democracy and wins for it; Boone, Carson, and their kind; poetry and adventure, politics and war, strangely blended in that almost incredible story which is the real America.

Scholarly yet appealing, Leland Dewitt Baldwin's *The Story of the Americas* (Simon & Schuster. \$3.50) covers the greatest colonization experiment ever undertaken by the human race: four hundred and fifty years of exploration and settlement, with the development of cultures that are Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, and Swedish, and the clashes between them prior to an adjust-

ment as yet incomplete. A book of sharp outlines, of newly revealed historical treasures, also of prophecy and caution.

John C. Miller writes impartially of the *Origins of the American Revolution* (Atlantic-Little Brown. \$3.50). He covers that period when a gathering sense of grievances and a growing sense of independence moved Colonial Americans toward their epochal Declaration. Constant use of fresh source material gives the book its tang. Merchants, farmers, planters, craftsmen, patriot men and loyal women—willing to forego luxury goods for the cause—all have their part in the forming of a union greater and stronger than they could ever have dreamed.

Gerald Johnson's *American Heroes and Hero-Worship* (Harper. \$3) tells the inside story of politicians and Presidents, greater or lesser men of destiny, the traditional or popular notion about whom needs to be clarified if not reversed. Shrewd in his appraisals, drastic yet always fair and never "debunking" by intent, Mr. Johnson is genially ironic in approach, makes a serious contribution to his subject, yet is entertaining while doing it. A highly illuminating piece of work.

Wilfred E. Binckley's discussion of *American Political Parties* (Knopf. \$3.75) turns on the thesis that our greatest leaders have been masters of the art of group diplomacy. Failing in the art of holding rival groups together, a President fails the nation. This is a shrewd study of government under the party system, and of the men who have led—and failed or succeeded in it. In contrast to the preceding, Merle Curti's *The Growth of American Thought* (Harper. \$5) recognizes that behind those interests which party leaders try to reconcile are trends of thought which are themselves the sources of blocs, group movements, or even of political parties. As an historian and an innovator in the field, Professor Curti explores these trends, religious as well as political, scientific as well as commercial, and gives full credit to contributions to our thought and social culture by immigrants of non-English-speaking stock. The ideas of the plain people, as well as those of bookmen and sages, he rates as "American thought." Result: a clearing-house for ideas that have had value, are still sound currency, or have passed out of circulation.

Charles A. Beard adopts the unusual device in *The Republic* (Viking. \$3) of

putting forward his ideas in the form of dialogues. A few friends meet for informal discussion of such questions as democracy and rights, Congress as power, the Executive as power, the Judiciary as power, parties, defense, and the future of the Republic. These friends—fictitious persons—voice their skepticism freely, and the argument often ends in a draw. But such light as history may throw on these issues is here brought to bear by "the Professor unfrocked" (as the author calls himself).

Like a bomb breaking into the contemplative quiet induced by such books as the foregoing, comes John Roy Carlson's *Under Cover* (Dutton. \$3.50). Going quickly to the top of the non-fiction best-seller list, the book needs no publicity here. Its revelations of subversive activities are appalling, but description can give no real inkling of them—they have to be read—and should be—by deluded persons of so-called American nationalist leanings who do not know what company they keep. For exposures made at the risk of his life—the pen name being scant protection here—and for intrepid courage and resourcefulness through years of perilous investigation, the highest credit goes to the Armenian-born author of this book.

INTERACTION OF THE OLD AND NEW WORLDS

Whirling the time-dial back to 1776 we find the Polish patriot, Washington's friend and aide during the Revolution, Kosciuszko, hitherto a legendary figure for most of us, brought into clear focus by Miecislau Haiman's documented account of the man and of his eight years of American experience. *Kosciuszko* (Herald Square Press. \$3) is drawn entirely from sources,

amply illustrated, with facsimiles of letters, drawings, and plans of fortifications by that competent engineer and artist, as well as revealing excerpts of correspondence between him and his military friends.

In 1843 Ole Bull, a Norwegian violinist already famed throughout Europe, met with a frenzied enthusiasm at his first American concert in New York. This in-

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cident, along with a full account of the man as artist and Utopian dreamer (he was founder, for instance, of a Norwegian colony at Oleana in the mountains of Pennsylvania—a fascinating chapter of American immigrant history) is in *The Life of Ole Bull* by Mortimer Smith (Princeton University Press. \$3) just published for the American-Scandinavian Foundation. It is an able and absorbing work stressing Ole Bull as a great personality.

Taro Yashima, a young Japanese artist who fought for ten years against the fascists of his country and who escaped to America four years ago, tells the story of his fight and his search for reality in *The New Sun* (Henry Holt. \$2.75). He employs the same weapons he formerly used against the fascists—intensely expressive pictures and simple, incisive words. As an artist Yashima believes in a new reality stemming from the lives of the people themselves, and his work is in-

fluenced by Western painters, who, like him, loved and understood the "common man." But more important is the message he brings—that there is a people's movement in Japan which will not be denied, that a new sun will rise to shed its brilliance "over me and over all people everywhere."

The Glorious Adventures of Tyl Ulenspiegel by Charles de Coster, published in 1869, makes its first appearance in a complete, popular English edition this autumn of 1943. The translation is by Allan Ross Macdougall (Pantheon Books. \$3.50). While *Tyl Ulenspiegel* ranks with and is compared with *Don Quixote*, the latter was created out of the stuff of imagination while the Belgian epic is set firmly in the framework of history and is saturated with it. Therefore more persons by far than those of Belgian background will be attracted to the book, and the reading will be more than a pleasant pastime.

THE AMERICAN SCENE

George Sessions Perry in *Roundup Time* (Whittlesey House. \$3) gives us a neat collection of Southwestern writing. Half of it is fiction, but the short stories and bits taken from novels contain the essence of living in the region described. The life sketches, non-fiction, are among the best things in the book. Among the critical essays that conclude the volume, one by Henry Nash Smith gives the clue to collective endeavor among Southwestern writers. They are, he says, concerned with the fate of man in this area, engaged in a joint venture: "the effort to reach an understanding of human experience in a specific geographical setting."

If war is too much with us and we need

assurance that there are still quiet eddies somewhere in American life, there is Anne Goodwin Winslow's *The Dwelling Place* (Knopf. \$2.50)—a book of vision and depth by a southern woman, a lover of nature, of gardens, and of living things, including people. Here is lightness and humor as well as discerning comment.

In another tempo, but as refreshing, is Elinor Graham's *Our Way Down East* (Macmillan. \$2) in which the former actress, dramatics teacher, and publicist in the New York area breaks with sophistication and learns true neighborliness from the farm and village folk of the coast of Maine. Her book is the lively and diverting story of this adjustment.

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AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933
OF COMMON GROUND, published quarterly at New
York 3, New York, for October 1, 1943.

State of New York } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared M. Margaret Anderson, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Editor of Common Ground and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, N.Y. Editor, M. Margaret Anderson

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BY ALEXANDER ALLAND

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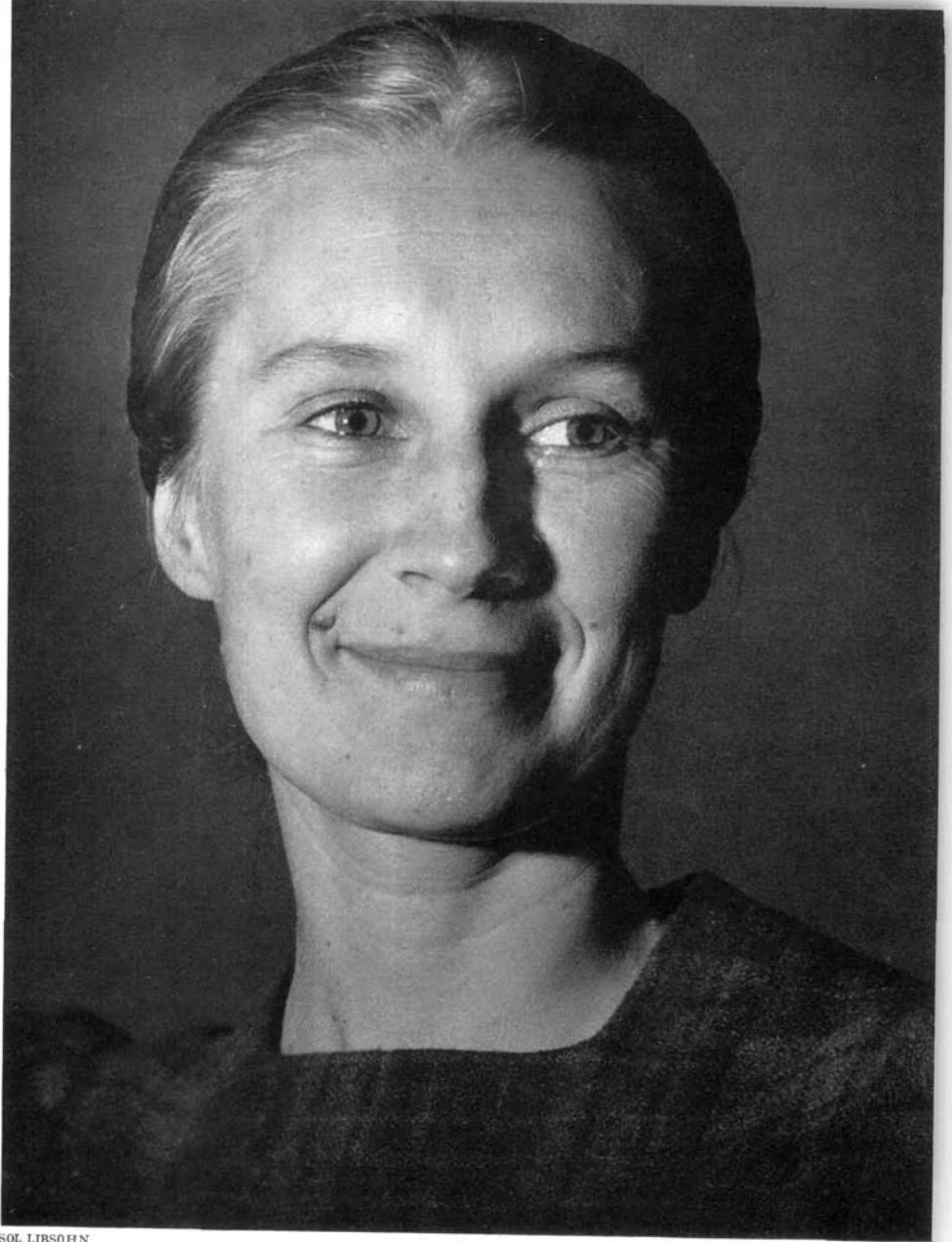
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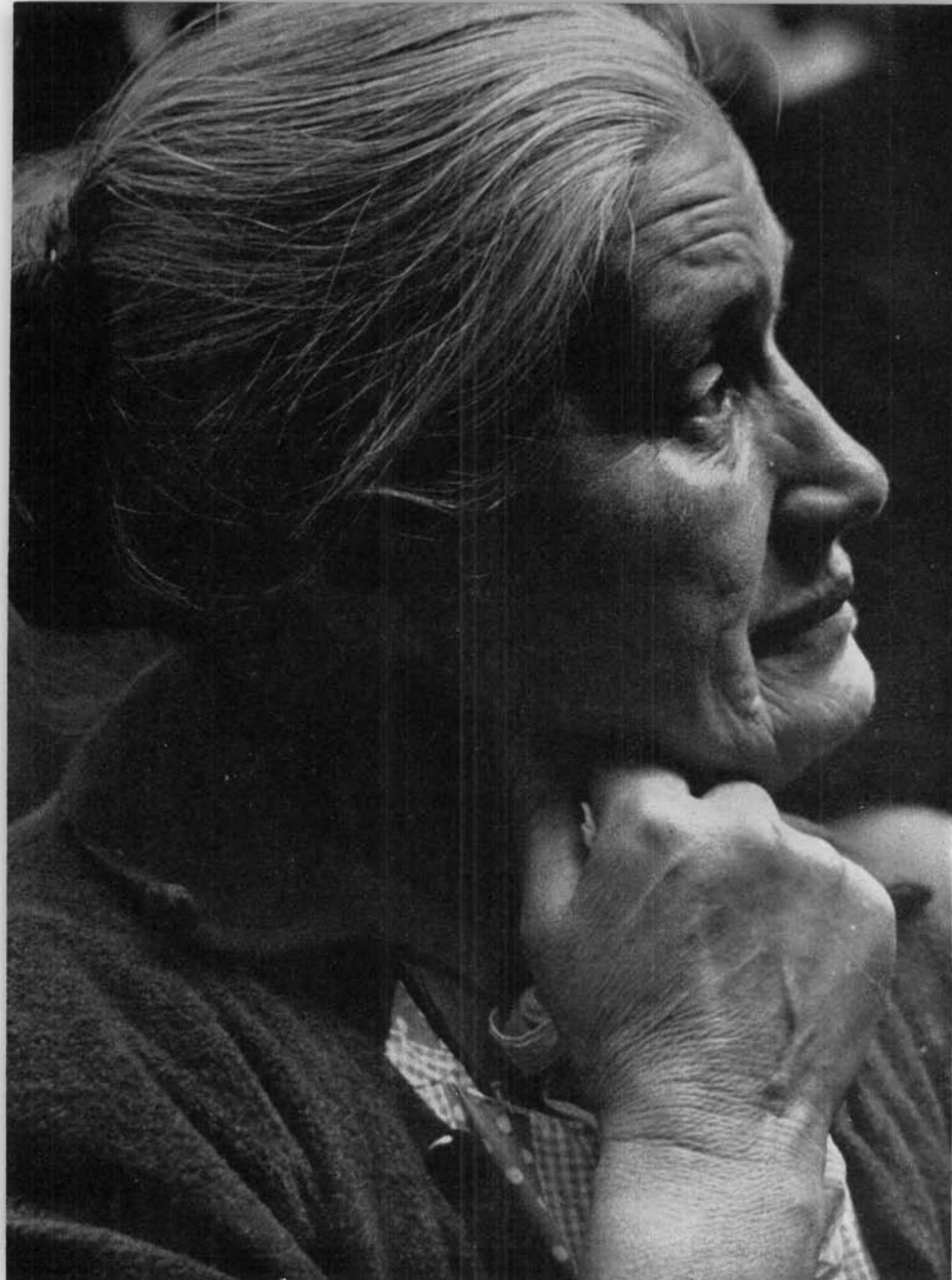
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